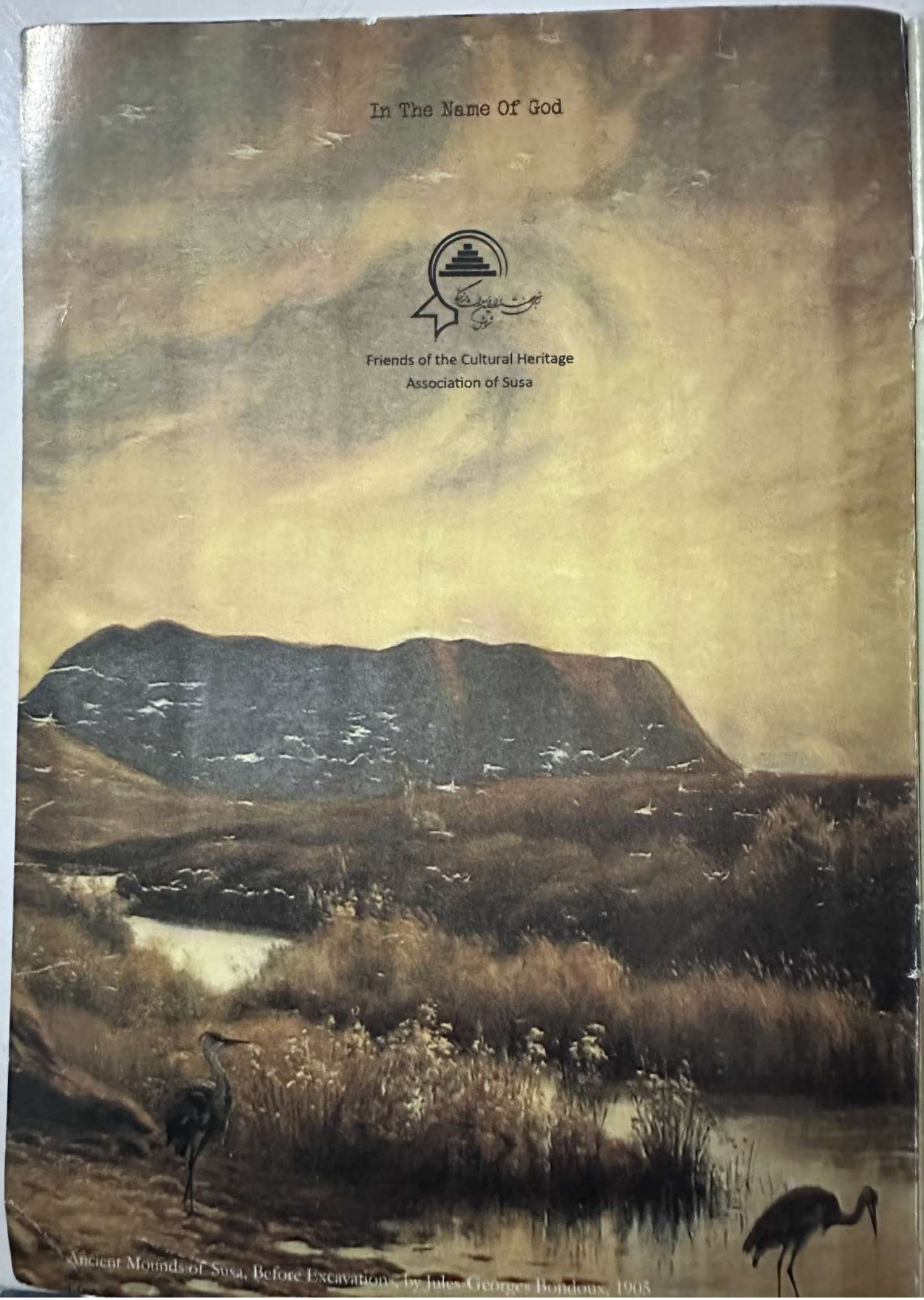
Ancient City of
Susa
6000 Year of History

In The Name Of God

Friends of the Cultural Heritage
Association of Susa



Ancient Mounds of Susa, Before Excavations, by Jules-Georges Bondoux, 1905

Contents

The ancient site of Susa	1
Determining the location of the city	2
Sir William Kent Loftus	
Excavations of Marcel and Jean Dieulafoy	3
Jacques de Morgan	4
Roland de Mecquenem	5
Roman Ghirshman	6
Jean Perrot	7
Mir 'Abedin Kabuli	8
Susiana: 6000 to 4000 BC.	10
Susa; 4000-3500 BC.	11
Cemetery and high terrace platform	
The beginning of writing in Susa	12
2500-3500 BC.	
Susa	13
2500-1400 BC.	
Susa	14
1400-1000 BC.	
Haft Tape the lost chain of Elam	15
Chogha Zanbil: 14th century BC.	16
Conquests of Elam: 12th century BC.	17
First millennium BC.	18
Achaemenid	19
Palace of Darius the Great	20
The reasons of the destruction of the Achaemenid palaces of Susa	21
Darius Gate	23
Statue of Darius the Great	23
Susa: The Propylaeum	24
Shaur Palace (Artaxerxes II)	25
A Bronze Coffin From The Acropole	26
Seleucid and Parthian periods	27
The Sassanian	28
Susa in the first Islamic centuries	29
Daniel the prophet	30

The tomb of Daniel the prophet
before reconstruction in the Qajar period

The ancient site of Susa

For centuries, the travelers who passed by the ancient hills of Susa did not even imagine that these huge piles of earth, which are now the shelter of the people, were once the cradle of a brilliant civilization and the glorious capital of the victorious rulers who triumphantly conquered the Mesopotamian cities or their territories has been widespread from the gates of Europe to India. All the people of the world had left the memory of those bright days in the bush of oblivion, except for the people of Kalimian (Jews) who recorded and remembered the name of Shushan and a part of what happened there in their holy books. Therefore, it was not a coincidence that the first person who recognized the ruins of Susa was Benjamin Bin Jinnah, Jew Rabbi, who was in Iran between 1163 and 1173 AD to investigate the situation of Kalimians (Jews). While visiting the tomb of Prophet Daniel, he also saw the ancient hills of Susa and recognized it as "Shushan" mentioned in the Old Testament book. While visiting the tomb of Prophet Daniel, he also saw the ancient hills of Susa and recognized it as "Shushan" mentioned in the Old Testament book. The hills of Susa represent the remnants of the settlement period, which practically continued to be inhabited constantly from the beginning of the 4th millennium BC to the 13th century AD. The area and the space of this ancient site is nearly 400 hectares. The ancient site of Susa generally consists of four hills.

One of these hills is the hill (Acropolis) on the northern end of which the castle of the French Archaeological Board was built in 1897 AD. This hill is higher than all other hills. But after the excavating operation started in it, its height was reduced and its current height may not exceed 30 to 35 meters above the water level of Shaur River.

The high hill of Acropolis overlooks the hill Apadana which is located in the north. In the eastern part of this hill, the Royal city hill is located. Royal city hill is wider than all other hills. There is also an area called the main big tower (prison) in the southernmost part of the Royal city. The lowest hill, which is made up of a low and high fields, is known as City of Artisans This hill is located in the eastern side of three other hills. A small river flows in the western part of the Acropolis hill and Apadana hill, whose sources are located 30 to 35 kilometers north of Susa. The water of this river, which is called "Shaur", flows into Karkheh River. The highest amount of water in the river is from mid-April to mid-May and the least amount of water is from mid-May to mid-June. Due to the fact that the maximum amount of Shaur water is in the dry seasons of the year, a large amount of it is used, especially for summer crops. Today, the tomb of Daniel the prophet is located in the western part of the Acropolis hill, on the side of Shaur River.

General view of Apadana and Chateau

Determining the location of the city Sir William Kent Loftus

In 1813, Sir John Malcolm Keener published an expanded description of the Susa site in the Khuzestan plain, in which he said in opposition to previous experts; this area is the "Shushan" mentioned in the Bible, not Shushtar, another city in Khuzestan with the same name as Shushan. For a long time, many experts disagreed on this issue.

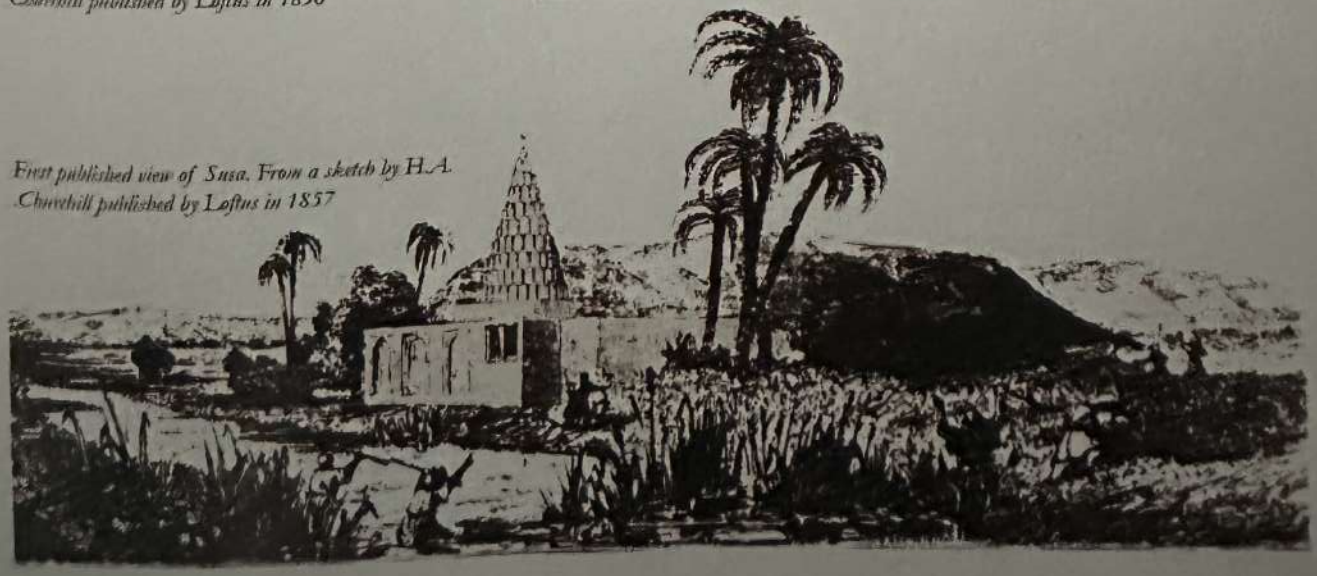
However, to confirm the truth of this issue, one must wait until the middle of the 19th century AD and the arrival of the British delegation. This board was responsible for determining the border line between the Ottoman Empire and Iran.

An archeologist named Loftus prepares a general map of the site and discovers four huge pillar bases on the northern hill of Susa (Apadana) along with decorated columns and stone capitals. On the base of the columns, there were inscriptions written in ancient Persian, Akkadian and Elamite languages from Artaxerxes II (404-359 BC), in which he mentions the palace of Darius, which was destroyed by fire during the reign of Artaxerxes I.

Ardeshir II restored it. There is no longer any doubt about the fact that the main northern hill of Susa (Apadana) and the "Shushan palace" mentioned in the Bible are one.

In fact, in the 12th century, Benjamin of Tudela (in Spain) reached the same conclusion by following the "Book of Daniel" and the main events recounted in the "Book of Esther" and besides considering Khuzestan and Elam to be the same, he announced that the ancient site of Susa was the place of Xerxes' palace in It was the book of Esther. After his research in 1851-1852 AD, Loftus rightly believed that Susa has not been fully explored yet.

Capitol column from Apadana, sketch by H.A. Churchill published by Loftus in 1850



First published view of Susa. From a sketch by H.A. Churchill published by Loftus in 1857

The first reconstruction of the Apadana Hall of the palace of Darius the Great in Susa, Marcel Dieulafoy

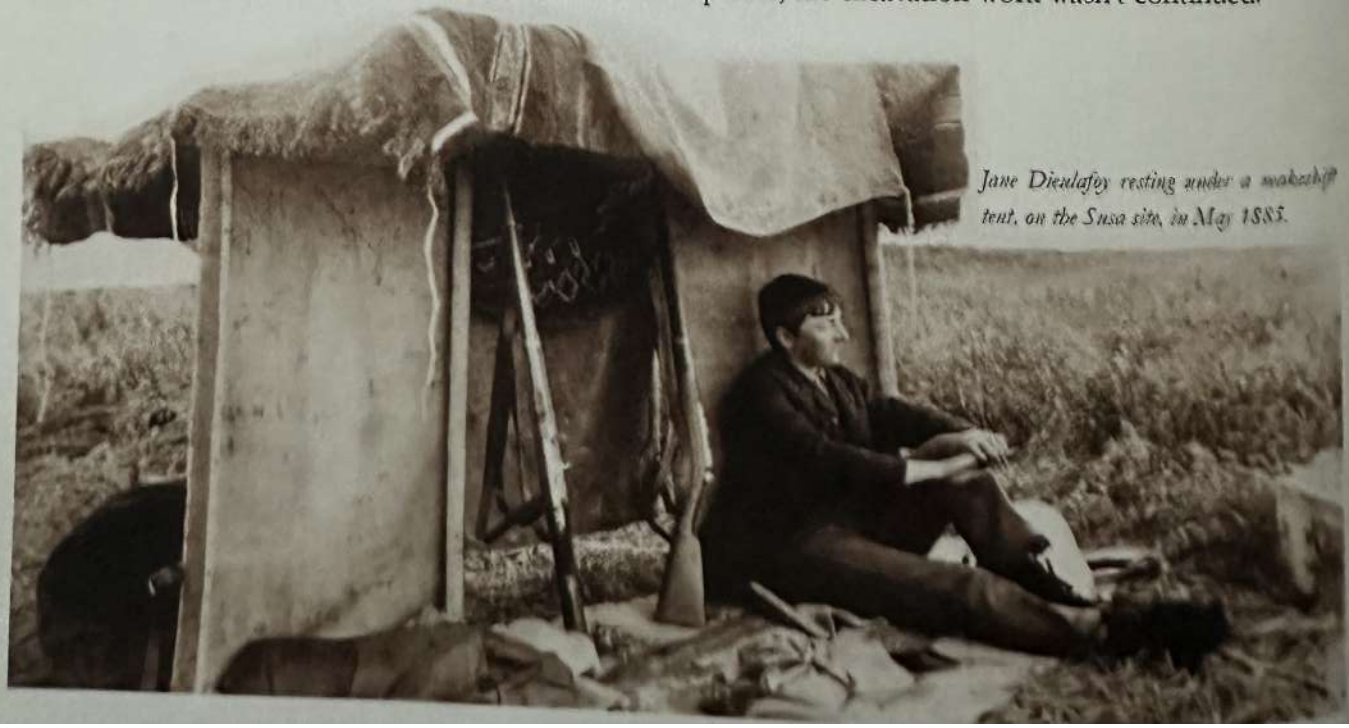
Excavations of Marcel and Jean Dieulafoy

In 1885, a French architect named Marcel Dieulafoy and his wife Jean, who had previously made a discovery trip to Iran, with the encouragement of the head of the French National Museum decided to explore Susa. By getting the order of Naser al-Din Shah, they are allowed to explore in Susa.

From 1884 to 1886, Dieulafoy with the help of two young colleagues including a surveyor named M. Boben in difficult conditions, present a new map of the area. They identify the great pillared (hypostyle) hall (Apadana). Parts of the columns, the bases of the columns and a huge capital in the form of the bust of two bulls and the glazed bricks were dicovered and collected and transferred to the Louvre Museum.

Restoration of these bricks with the help of Sevor Workshop makes it possible to restore parts of palace entrances known as Lions, griffins, Archers and parts of Apadana stairs made of glazed bricks decorated with lotus motifs, which were exhibited immediately in the halls of the first floor of the entrance hall in the Louvre Museum. The architecture of the palace remains unknown for that time.

The description of Apadana, as well as a large Achaemenid city, by Marcel originates from fiction. However, the "journal of explorations" that Jean Dieulafoy writes without paying attention to the correctness of the author's writings is more than a collection of stories and offers interesting points. Despite the achievements made in 1885 and 1886 in the area of Darius the Great's palace, the excavation work wasn't continued.



Jane Dieulafoy resting under a makeshift tent, on the Susa site, in May 1885.

Jacques de Morgan

A few years later, in 1891, Jacques de Morgan, a geologist and expert in prehistoric times, visited Susa during a research trip in western Iran. The huge hills of Susa immediately fascinated him, and by obtaining the exclusive right of archaeological excavations in Iran for France, and with the aim of conducting a long-term multidisciplinary research and the methods of implementing this idea, he formed an expedition to Iran with many facilities and entered Shush in 1897.

In the first year, he was awarded two hundred thousand francs by the French Parliament. His first concern was to build a large discovery house on the northern part of "Citadel", which was later called "Acropolis", like a military fortress. This house was proudly called "Chateau".

Excavation in Susa Acropolis was very satisfactory. In the first one or two years, under the works of the Parthian and Achaemenid periods, important masterpieces such as the Naram-Sin memorial tablet, several Kudurru or boundary stones (border marks) and a large amount of glazed bricks were obtained.

Among these works, there were many brick inscriptions, which were carefully collected by the exploration committee. Jean-Vincent Scheil, who was a great Assyrian scholar, devoted himself to studying these inscriptions. The valuable collection of reports of the expedition board to Iran was quickly printed in order to publish the results of the excavations.

In 1900, with a new agreement signed by Muzaffar al-Din Shah in Paris, France's monopoly was reconfirmed and it was also agreed that the ownership of all the objects obtained from Shushan excavation would belong to France, and instead, France was committed to pay for the golden and silver objects in cash to government of Iran.

de Morgan resigned in October 1912 due to the protests against him in France and because his stay in the East had worn him down, and subsequently he transferred his heavy responsibility to his young colleague, Roland de Mecquenem, who accompanied him since 1903.

Jacques de Morgan and Jean-Vincent Scheil
This photograph shows Jacques de Morgan, seated, with Jean-Vincent Scheil. Behind them is the Victory Stela of Naram-Sin, found in Susa.

Château de Suse (Susa Castle)
The fort of the Jacques de Morgan French archaeological mission

On the left, de Mecquenem and his wife, 1912

Roland de Mecquenem

He joined the group in 1903. His curiosity more than anything led him to explore Apadana. From 1909 to 1913, with the cooperation of a young architect named Maurice Pillet, by exploring the central part of the Achaemenid palace, de Mecquenem discovered frames of glazed bricks, columns and the bases of columns. After the completion of the work, Pillet prepared a schematic map of the entire Apadana Palace complex, and in May 1914, a few months before the outbreak of the World War, she published a small monograph that was all about the Darius Palace.

World War I stops excavation works. After the First World War, de Mecquenem joined the armored forces of the Verdun front. Susa is occupied by the British army and a group of Bengali cavalry is stationed in the French fort. After the end of the war, in 1920 de Mecquenem and his colleagues returned to Susa .With almost a large number of workers, he created vast pits everywhere, the most obvious result of which was to provide information about the material culture of Susa. Roland de Mecquenem finishes the exploration of the cemetery containing the painted vessels. He discovers a large building belonging to the post-Achaemenid period on the area known as "Donjon" and in Shushan Plain, Louis Le Breton conducts research on the prehistoric hills of Jafarabad, Jowi and Bandebal.

Louis le Breton later presents a theory from the collected information that remains valid for a long time. In 1927 AD, the National Assembly of Iran canceled the concessions of 1895 and 1900. From this date onwards, half of the discovered objects from Susa belonged to Iran.

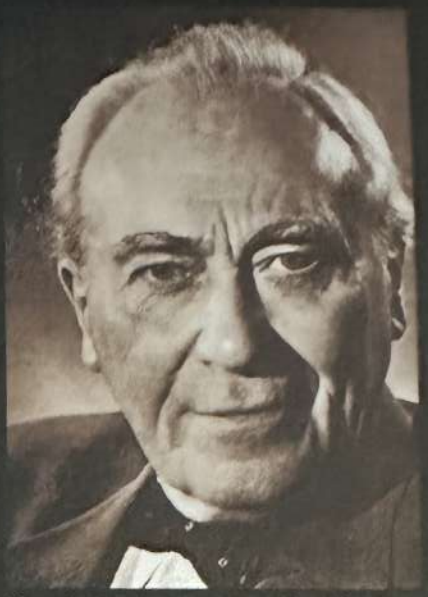
Maurice Pillet, Susa, Palace of Darius the Great, (1912-1913 excavations)

Jafarabad Excavation in 1934, from left: de Mecquenem, le Breton and Jamshid Unvala

In 1935, the geologist of the Iranian and English oil company identified a large hill surrounded by a double fence about 40 kilometers southeast of Susa. In this area, which had an area of about 100 hectares and was called Chogha Zanbil, de Mecquenem discovered scripted bricks with the name of Untash-Napirsha, which is well known in the documents discovered in Susa. Roland de Mecquenem carried out four short excavation operations there, and fortunately, because his team had a small number of workers, irreparable damage was not done to the site and objects.

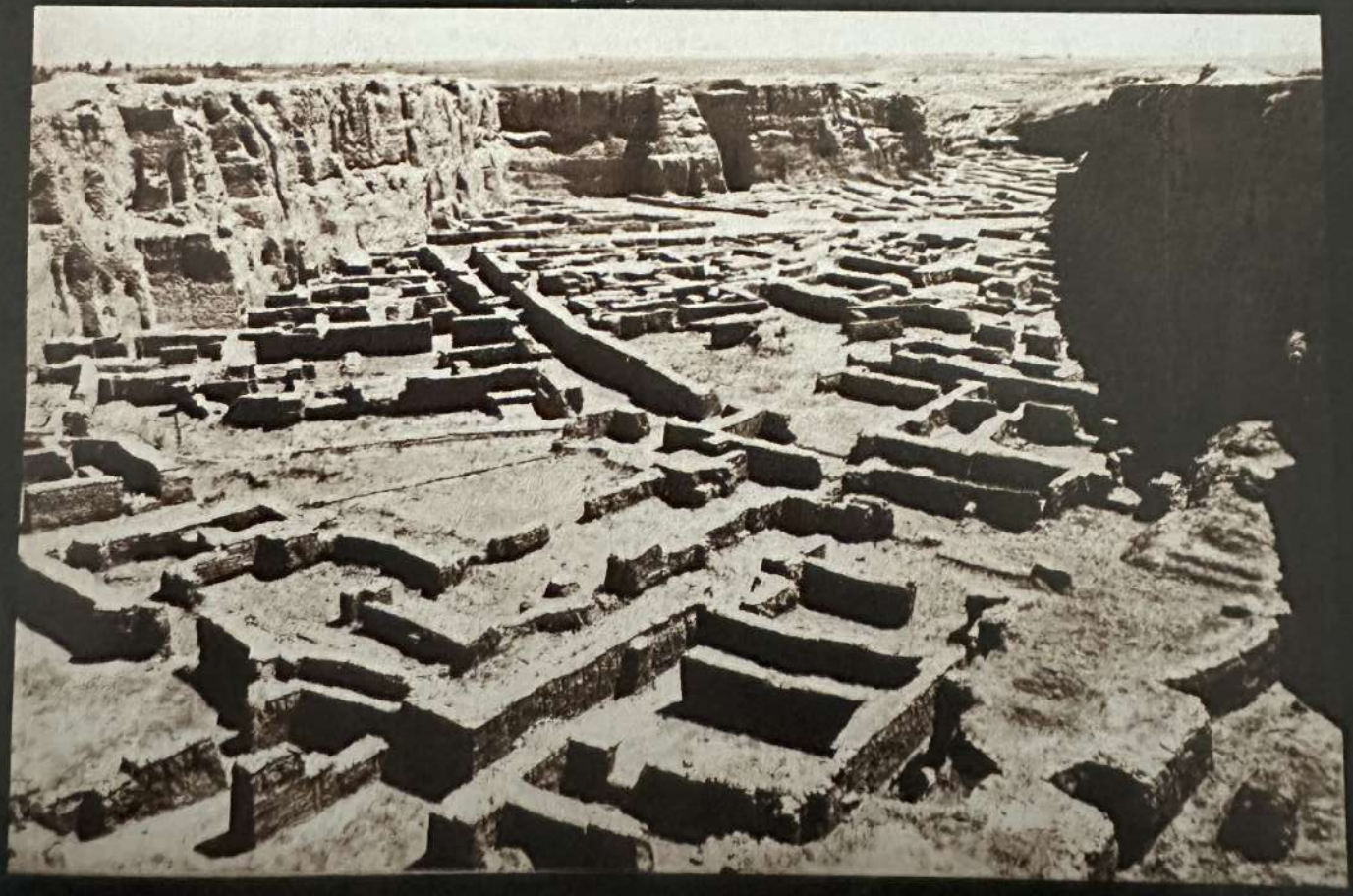
The discovery of the ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil in 1935, 40 kilometers southeast of Susa, took de Mecquenem's entire time until 1939 and World War II

Roman Ghirshman



In 1946, with the resignation of de Mecquenem, Ghirshman became the head of the French archaeological delegation in Susa.
In 1946, he started excavating in an area of approximately one hectare in the Royal city (A) in the northern part of the Royal city in front of the Achaemenid palace. In this excavation, his emphasis was more on horizontal soil removal than stratigraphy, and finally in 1966, he reached to virgin soil at a depth of approximately 15 meters from the surface of royal City hill and succeeded in revealing a large part of Elamite city.
The knowledge that we have today about the architecture and urban settlement, the materials used and the development of Susa during a period that may be the most important part of its history, owes to these activities.
Parallel to the excavations in the Royal City, Ghirshman also started extensive excavations in the part known as "Achaemenid village" in the northwest of the artisan city of Susa.
Considering his interest in the subject of the arrival of Indians and Europeans to Iran and their settlement in this land, he considered the works obtained from the Achaemenid village of Susa to represent the Achaemenids who had recently arrived in Susa and settled there. But today we know that the oldest layer of this village dates back to the second stage of the new Elamite period (about 725 to 520 BC) and it's not related to Achaemenids.
One of the most important Ghirshman works and services to the archeology of Iran was his continuous excavations in the ancient site of Chogha Zanbil, which was started in a preliminary way from the time of de Mecquenem.
With Ghirshman's excavations in Chogha Zanbil, which continued from 1950 to 1962, in addition to the ziggurat, many other structures were discovered, which added to our information about the unclear period of Middle Elam. This is considered one of the exceptional actions in the history of Middle East archeology. The results of these explorations have been published in four volumes.

Remains of the 15th city, around 1660 BC. Grishman, Susa, Royal City



Jean Perrot

In 1968, Jean Perot was appointed as the head of the French delegation, and archaeological studies in Susa entered a new phase.

Perrot came to Susa in 1963 at Ghirshman's invitation and spent a short time on experimental speculation in the Acropolis. In 1968, after Ghirshman's retirement, he was appointed as the head of the French delegation, and based on his study background and work experience, he created a new program, and in close cooperation with the Iranian Archaeological Center and specialists from different branches, and started an international project to obtain information from the Ancient Susa hills. As the result of that, since 1968 Geneviève Dollfus started working in Jafarabad, Jowi and Bandebal hills in order to clarify the situation of the Susa plain in the pre-history to the history of the Susa 1 period.

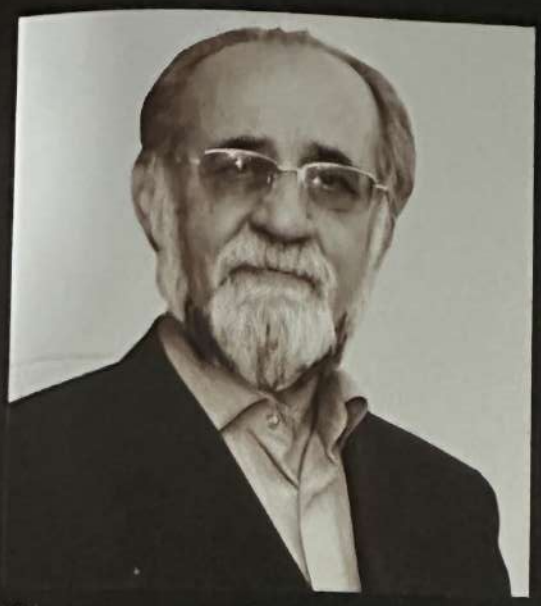
From the same year, Alan Le Buren carefully studied the soil collection index that remained from the time of Jacques de Morgan and Roland de Mecquenem in the workshop known as Acropolis 1, in order to reach the stratification of Susa from about 4000 to 3000 BC. Jean Perrot and Denis Canal also studied the "Haute terrasse" in the Acropole 2, which was located in the heart of the Acropolis hill, and obtained information about its structure and antiquity. On the other hand, Elizabeth Carter from the University of Los Angeles started work in Royal City 1 to dererminе the status of the thousand-year gap between Alain Le Brun's research (4000 to 3000 BC) in the Acropolis and Ghirshman's research (around 2000 to 1000 BC) in the Royal city. Pierre de Miroschedji also focused his studies on the end layers of the second millennium to the middle of the first millennium BC in Royal City 2 workshop in order to obtain information about this ambiguous period in the history of Elam.

At the same time, Perrot along with Daniel Ladray started his work in the Achaemenid Apadana Palace in 1969 and following these excavations, in addition to a lot of information, in 1970 palace inscriptions and in 1972 a statue of Darius the Great were obtained.

French Archaeological delegation in Susa, 1974

Pierre Amiet next to the statue of Darius the Great, Susa in 1972

Since 1970, Adrian Labrus and Remi Bucharlat, with the cooperation of Mahmoud Kordvani, began to excavate in Shaur Palace and Monique Kervran excavated in the Islamic layers of the artisan city of Susa. Albert Hess also obtained important information about the ancient sites of Susa and the nearby ancient sites, especially the foundations of the Achaemenid Apadana palace, with geophysical investigations. During these years, François Vallat , who worked with the committee as a linguist, provided great services to our understanding of the language and history of Elam, and the indirect cooperation of Pierre Amiet, the curator of the Oriental Antiquities of the Louvre Museum, with the committee in the description, classification and dating of works of art, especially Seals and the effect of seals obtained from Susa and other ancient sites have provided us with a lot of information in these categories. Other Perrot's actions was the launch of the annual publication of the French Archaeological Commission in Iran in 1971, of which 15 issues have been published so far, but its publication has remained stagnant for several decades due to the cessation of field research in Susa.



Mir 'Abedin Kabuli

After the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran, which resulted in the suspension of the field activities and researches of all the foreign archaeological teams, the French team also left Iran and the work in Susa was stopped.

In 1361, following the planning of the municipality for widening the square and landscaping on the northwest side of the Apadana hill, this part of the Susa area was endangered.

As a result, a delegation led by Mir Abedin Kabuli from the Iranian Archaeological Center was deployed in this ancient site. The purpose of this committee was to clarify the condition of the western front of the wall of the Apadana throne and the quality and quantity of the works of the distance between the edges of the main street of the modern city of Susa.

This team excavated from March 1361 to mid-May 1363 at the western wall of the huge platform on which Apadana Palace was built to clarify the situation of this side of the site.

By digging and excavating in three workshops, in addition to works from the Islamic period and a cemetery from the Parthian period, the Achaemenid wall was also revealed and it was determined that this adobe wall was built on several rows of bricks covered with tar. Excavation of the board showed that a part of the wall has fallen back about 3 meters. In this large depression and concavity, in addition to scattered artifacts, a palm-sized piece of a stone inscription in ancient Persian cuneiform was found.

The most impressive and significant work that was identified in this exploration is a brick kiln from the Seljuk period, which is valuable in the study of the brick making industry.

The exploration project on the western front of the Apadana Palace was stopped for 11 years. In 1373, with the change of the research management of the Cultural Heritage Organization, exploration operations were resumed. This time, Susa's archeology group continued to explore with the same goal and plan.

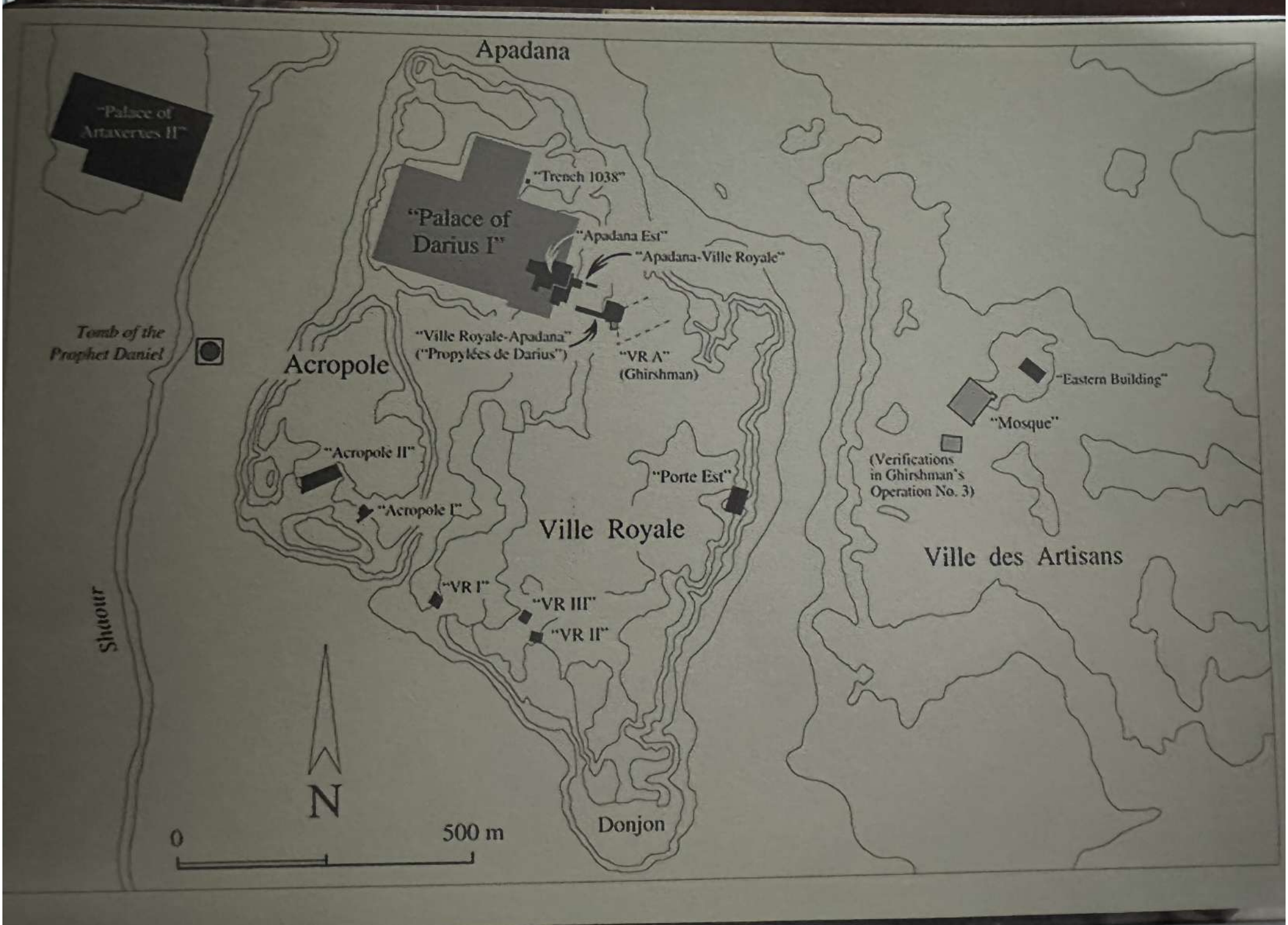
The archeology group of Susa is trying to accurately identify the entire Achaemenid wall using the tracking method. Although the tracking work took a long time, but at the end of the fourth season of exploration, they encountered signs that indicate changes in the northern part of this wall. This transformation was a biological, ceremonial or decorative space inside the throne or palace wall. The exploration team concluded that this point might be the entrance to the palace.

This theory is strengthened by the finding of more than a hundred pieces of arrowheads, spearheads and weapons.

Especially, with the studies that were conducted, it was revealed that the obtained arrowheads are not related to Iranian culture and are not among the war weapons of the Achaemenid era or the pre-Achaemenid period, but belong to the Mediterranean Sea area, in other words, they could have belonged to Greece or belonging to the soldiers of Alexander the Great.

In the fifth chapter the exploration was carried out solely for the purpose of uncovering revealing what was called the Apadana entry.

Battle of Darius III and Alexander the Great, colored mosaic, Pompeii


Apadana
"Palace of Artaxerxes II"
"Trench 1038"
"Palace of Darius I"
"Apadana Est"
"Apadana-Ville Royale"
Tomb of the Prophet Daniel
"Ville Royale-Apadana" ("Propylées de Darius")
"VR A" (Ghirshman)
Acropole
"Eastern Building"
"Mosque"
"Acropole II"
(Verifications in Ghirshman's Operation No. 3)
"Porte Est"
"Acropole I"
Ville Royale
Ville des Artisans
"VR I"
"VR III"
"VR II"
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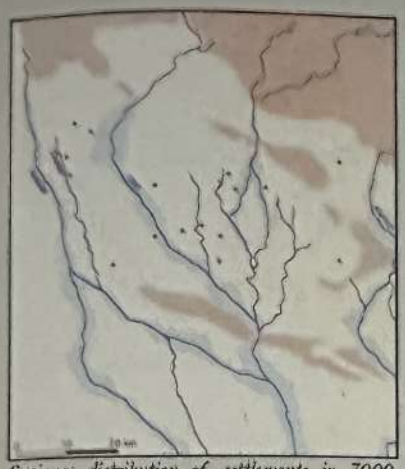


Susiana: distribution of settlements in 7000 years ago. Population density seems to be low.

Susiana: 6000 to 4000 BC

When Susa was founded at the beginning of the fourth millennium BC, Khuzestan had a long history behind it.

During the 7th millennium BC, the central plain became dynamic and settlements were formed in it, the oldest of which was Chogha Bonut. Next to some of these settlements, shepherds had set up their tents (American explorations).

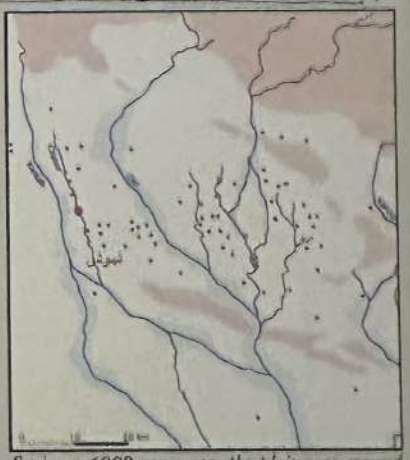
The excavations carried out in Susa and the investigations of Shushan in the 1930s by the French archaeological mission in Iran (de Mecquenem and le Breton), and from 1967 to 1979 by the French National Center for Scientific Research and the joint French-Iranian mission in Susa, with The close cooperation of Iranian and American archaeologists made it possible to know more about the development of villages and how they were scattered in the plain from the end of the 6th millennium BC to the early time of the 4th millennium BC.

At the end of the sixth millennium B.C., the density of villages was low and the settlements included one or more residential units for families to live. Villagers raised goats and sheep, and to a lesser extent cattle, and hunted gazelles, horses, and boars. They used water from the springs of the river and planted wheat, barley, lentils and peas.

In the middle of the 5th millennium BC, there were more than a hundred villages in the plain, among which we can mention Jowi and Bandebal. Some settlements changed their nature. Like Jafarabad, which became a potter's workshop. At the same time, and in the center of the Chogha Mish plain, which was one of the oldest villages, it expanded too much (18 hectares) and a large building was built in it (American excavations). This era, indicates increasing specialization of settlements.

At the end of the fifth millennium and the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C., the number of villages reached its maximum. Jafarabad was settled again and the number of houses reached 5 to 6 for the families. The rare number of graves discovered in this area belonged to children with two or three jars placed next to them; Adults were not buried in residential areas.

This type of small settlements is undoubtedly similar to the settlements that formed the first human settlement in Susa. Although Susa was not located in the center of the plain like Chogha Mish and was on its periphery, it quickly became an important religious center.



Susiana: 6000 years ago, the plain was covered with villages.

Painted pottery from Jafarabad ▼

Jafarabad: (6000 years ago) large clay seals with geometric, animal motifs and decorative lines ▲

Jafarabad: (7000 years ago) a piece of pottery with figures of dancing people. ◄

Jafarabad: (5000 BC) This village is located on the bank of Shaour river. ▼

Jafarabad: (6000 years ago) The Mud-Brick grave of a child in. There is an Painted Vessels next to the child's head ►

Jafarabad: (5000 BC) agricultural tools ▲

Jafarabad: (6000 years ago) a house consisting of only one room. Cooking is done in the open air ◄

Painted vessels from the graves of the first cemetery of Susa (6000 years ago).

Susa; 4000-3500 BC.

Cemetery and high terrace platform

The first settlement of Susa was formed about 6000 years ago with an area of nearly 10 hectares by the Shaur River. This settlement had more than a thousand inhabitants from the beginning.

They brought the remains of their dead, placed them in small clay coffins on the ground, thus creating a strange cemetery around a rectangular structure. In each coffin, in addition to the pieces of bones, there are beautiful carved dishes or natural bitumen dishes, as well as several axes and copper mirrors.

After a few generations, the residents of Susa built a large courtyard with sides of more than 80 meters in the middle of the village. This column, which was located on a 2-meter-high base, is the most important building ever built by human hands, with about 50,000 cubic meters of soil and clay.

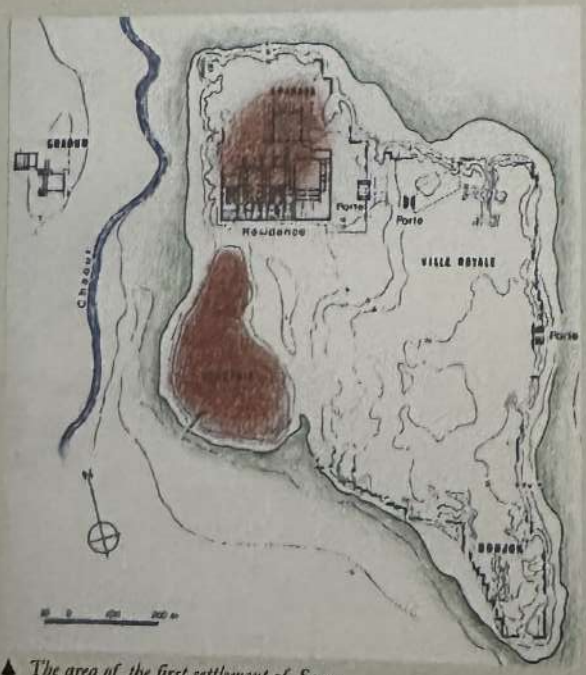
The surfaces of the platform were decorated with rows of large clay studs, and at the top of it was a mansion with a 400 square meter foundation, of which there is no trace left today. This building tells about a society with regular organization. Because building it requires more than a lot of labor.

It required a plan and the presence of an architect and expert workers, as well as employees who could provide the necessities and supplies needed by the workforce and distribute them among them.

This platform, which can be seen from a long distance in the plain, is the sign of the Susa region. In the excavations conducted between 1968 and 1978 in the Acropole (workshops 1, 2 and 3), traces of human life dating back to 4000 to 3000 years ago were found that belongs to prehistory periods (Susa period I, II and III).

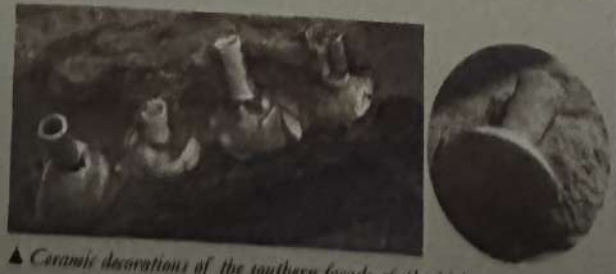
The remains of Susa 1 in workshop 1 in Acropolis include layers 27 to 23 and in workshop 2 in Acropolis include layers 11 to 7. This period presents the first occupation and settlement in Susa.

During this period, the residents of Susa built a high terrace platform with sides of more than 80 meters in the middle of the village, the explored part of this impressive and important building complex consists of a platform and one floor, and at the top of it was a mansion with a 400 square meter foundation. Of which there is no trace left today.



▲ *The area of the first settlement of Susa*

The first floor of the building, whose collapsed facade has been revealed, had decorations in the form of rows of Ceramic "pegs" in sets of 4 or 5. Simultaneously with the construction of this platform, a large cemetery with about two thousand graves was created around this platform.



▲ *Ceramic decorations of the southern facade of the high terrace*

The reconstruction of thehigh terrace platform

Alabaster objects ▼

The beginning of writing in Susa 2500-3500 BC.

Around 3500 BC, southern Mesopotamian influence is felt in Susa (Susa Period II, known as the Uruk Period).

The appearance of pottery, which is called rough, and the architectural changes that accompanied it indicate the beginning of the second period of Susa, during which the high terrace platform went to ruin and decline. After that, this building has not been used except occasionally, and in any case, it seems that it has lost its original meaning and role for which it was established. In workshop 2, after a short period of resettlement and after 3500 BC, floors belonging to period 2 were found on the cemetery containing painted vessels and a high terrace platform which its collapsed facade was decorated with large clay studs and pegs . The same sequence of works is repeated in workshop 1 .Coarse pottery, stoneware and small copper figurines, and especially the development of accounting that led to the creation of calligraphy and writing, are the characteristics of the second period known as the Uruk period. During this period, the style of house building changes, Coarse pottery replaces the painted pottery, bowls known as beveled rim, are produced almost on an industrial scale, but their usage wasn't clear .

The use of stone, as well as metal, becomes important, and copper is used in making tools and small sculptures. Along with economic development, social hierarchies appear, the problem of how to manage surplus incomes and the increase of exchanges leads to the emergence of accounting. Clay spheres with the effect of seals, tablets and seals appear from 3500 BC onwards.

Susa period 3, begins with layer 16 and the appearance of the Proto-Elamite tablets. Ordinary seals and cylindrical seals are used to determine the identity of persons. In Susa contemporary with southern Mesopotamia, the progress of accounting led to the appearance of writing.

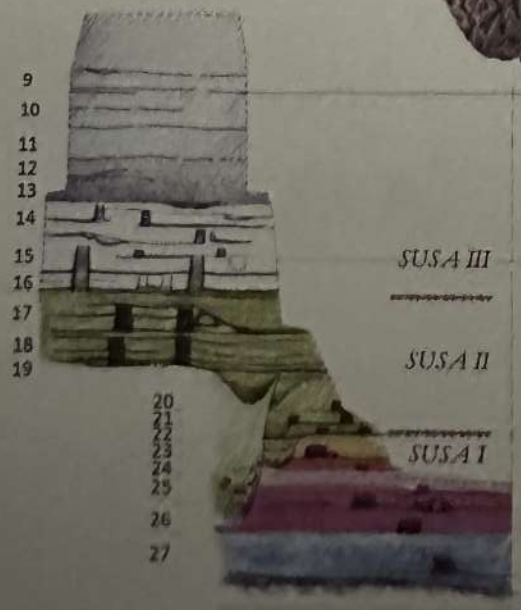
Proto-Elamite tablet ▼

The impression of a cylindrical seal on an Proto-Elamite tablet ▼

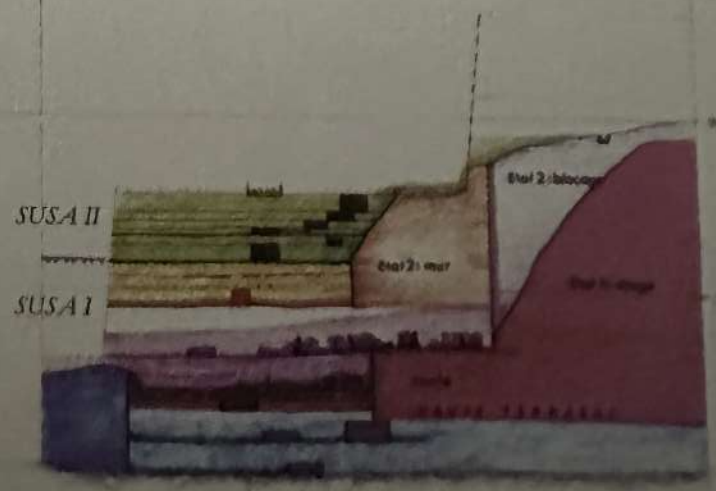
Acropole, Workshop 1, a mass of Beveled rim bowls found in a pit located in Layer 19, Susa Period II (Uruk). ▼

Bulla with cylindrical seal impression ▼

Numerical tablet with a cylindrical seal impression ▼



Acropole 1, Stratigraphic Section ▲



Acropole 2, Stratigraphic Section ▲

▼ *A painted jar with a lid and its contents*

Susa
2500-1400 BC.

The early Elamite civilization led to the unification of the high land of Anshan (nowadays Fars province) and the low land of Shushan plain.

In the middle of the 3rd millennium BC Shushan was integrated into the Mesopotamian society and Shushan became an example of a Sumerian city, with the temple of the Great Goddess on the citadel of the city, a temple where the figurines donated by the worshipers of the goddess were piled up.

Around 2250 BC, Sargon of Akkad, the king of Mesopotamia, added Susa to his empire. Pozor-Inshushinak temporarily restored the freedom of the city. He became the supporter of official art and a new writing style known as (Linear) writing to record the Elamite language, a writing whose use was extended to the Lut desert.

Around 2000 BC, the kings of Ur (Sumer) annexed Shushan again and built two huge temples in Shushan for the divine couple Inshushinak and Ninhursag. But the Sumerian imperialism led to the union of the Elamite princes who were submissive and obedient to the Sumerians until then; (First, the Simashkis in the north and then the Anshanis in the east). The princes of Anshan founded the dual kingdom of Anshan and Susa with the hierarchy of princes under the command of the emperors (Sukkalmah).

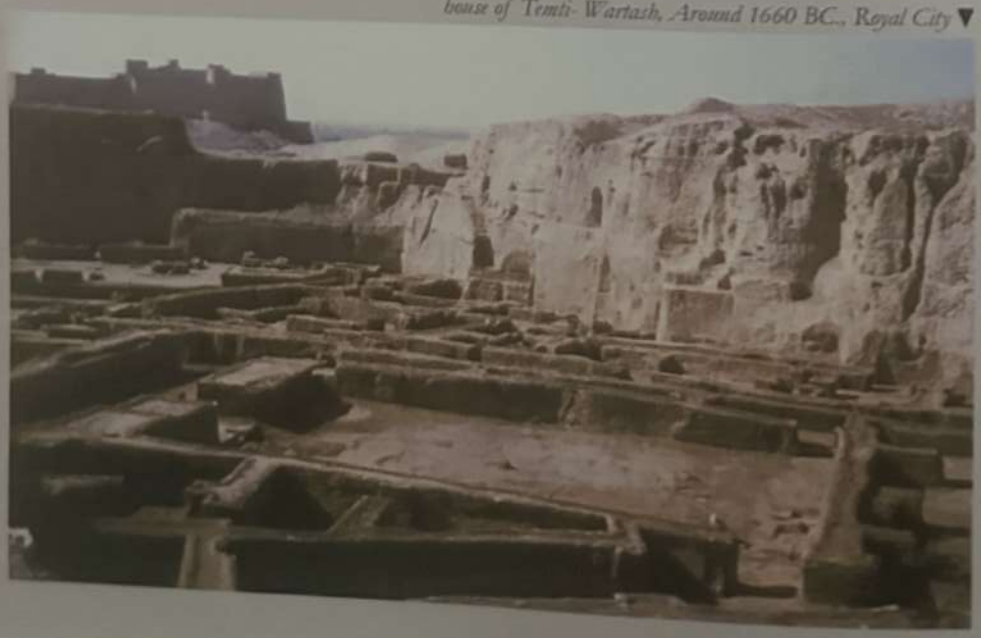
From 2000 to 1500 BC, Susa developed a lot and became a regional and possibly international center and capital. Ghirshman's excavations in Royal City hill in Workshop A, provided a unique view of the urban map and its related developments in an approximate period from 1800 to 1400 BC. Court and royal officials built their residences or indeed (as Ghrishman's findings show) their palaces in this section. Their archives, which are in Akkadian script, reveal the unique unparalleled establishment of the people who spoke the Semitic language and were citizens of the Elamite princes.

browze statue of a god riding a chariot ◀

◀ *A God putting a foundation nail in the ground, protected by a Lama goddess, in front of a roaring lion. Coiled snake on top. Inscriptions in Linear Elamite and Akkadian. Time of Puzur-Inshushinak, circa 2100 BC.*

Statue of goddess Narundi dedicated by Puzur-Inshushinak, with inscriptions in Linear Elamite and in Akkadian ▼

house of Temti- Wartash, Around 1660 BC., Royal City ▼



Model of the 'Sit Shamsi' ceremony, from Susa, c.1150 BC (louvre) ▼

Susa
1400-1000 BC.

The exploration of the ancient sites of Susa and Chogha Zanbil by French excavators introduces the art of the second half of the second millennium.

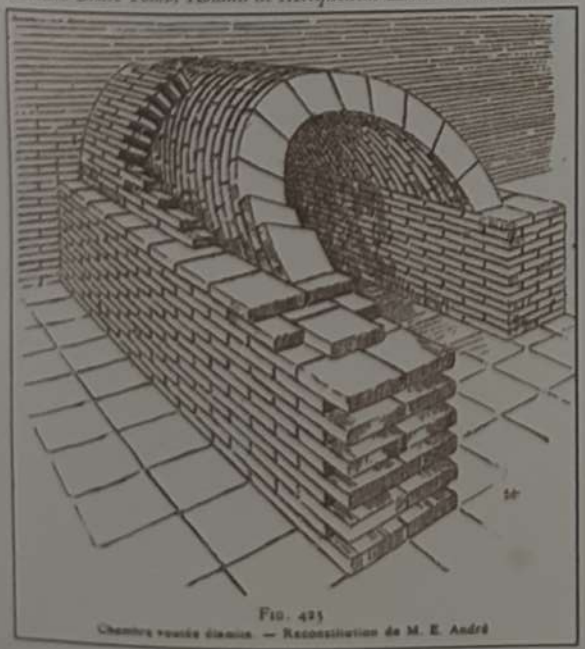
Susa Acropolis excavations under the supervision of de Morgan that led to the discovery of very interesting objects such as the magnificent statue of Queen Napir-Asu, the wife of Untash-Napirisha, the prayer platform which is carried by five gods, the Model of a place of worship known as (Sit-shamshi) which is engraved with the name Shilhak-inshushinak. These objects reveal the extraordinary skill of the metalworkers of this period (12th century BC).

The same mastery is evident in the making of smaller objects, such as the two gold and silver statues of who carrying goats. These two statues, were among gifts presented for founding the building, were found near Inshushinak Temple in 1904.

Statue of Queen Napir-Asu, wife of King Untash-Napirisha, 1400 BC. ▲
Bronze and copper

Molded-brick relief of a bull-man and palm tree, from the façade of the temple of Inshushinak, patron god of Susa, bearing inscriptions of the ruler Shilhak-Inshushinak (12th century BCE, Middle Elamite period) ▲

Vaulted Brick Tomb, Roland de Mecquenem Excavations, Susa ▼



Parts of decorations made of molded bricks have been found in this temple, which shed light on this particular aspect of Middle Elamite art, which was influenced by Babylonian art. Finally, the excavations of de Mecquenem and Ghirshman reveal the burial traditions of the Middle Elamite period. In graves that have crescent arches and in which many burials took place, they placed colorful faces of flowers. These faces probably represented the deceased person.

Gold statuette of a man carrying a goat , Acropole, Middle Elamite Period, c.1500-1200 BC. ▲

▲ *Elamite Funerary Clay Heads, c. 1500 BC*

▲ The mass grave with 23 human skeletons

Haft Tape the lost chain of Elam

The oldest cultural remains belonging to the Middle Elam period have been identified in Haft Tepe.

The site of Haft Tepe is located 15 kilometers southeast of Susa. In 1344, the Department of Archeology of Culture and Art of Tehran University, under the supervision of Dr. Ezatollah Negahban, started an excavation in this area. The exploration and excavation in Haft Tepe ancient site took eleven seasons.

The purpose of these excavations was to investigate the situation and clarify a part of the history of Elam. By carrying out these excavations, a part of the dark period of 1505-1305 BC was identified. The results of Haft Tepe excavations were tombs, all kinds of pottery, pottery inscriptions, bronze objects, and many pottery sculptures. Also, the family tomb of Tepti-ahar, the powerful king of Elam, came out from under the soil.

On this tomb, an oval arch using the pointed arch method and the remains of 23 human skeletons were found. This area contains the remains of a city and a large community related to the Middle Elam era, around the 14th century BC, which is made up of several hills. According to the works and tablets obtained from this area, it was probably the city of "Kabnak". The city was destroyed at the end of the 14th century BC, during which parts of the buildings were destroyed by fire.

This site was inhabited for a limited period and after its destruction, it never regained its previous prosperity and only small settlements and temporary settlements were established in the later Parthian and Sassanid eras. Next to the Elamite remains of Haft Tepe, a museum was established in 1351, which keeps the works obtained from Haft Tepe's excavations.

Vaulted brick tomb ▲

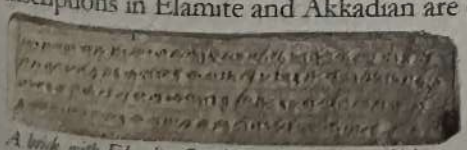
Ceramic figurine of animals, musicians and goddesses ▼

◄ *painted terracotta male portrait*

Chogha Zanbil: 14th century BC.

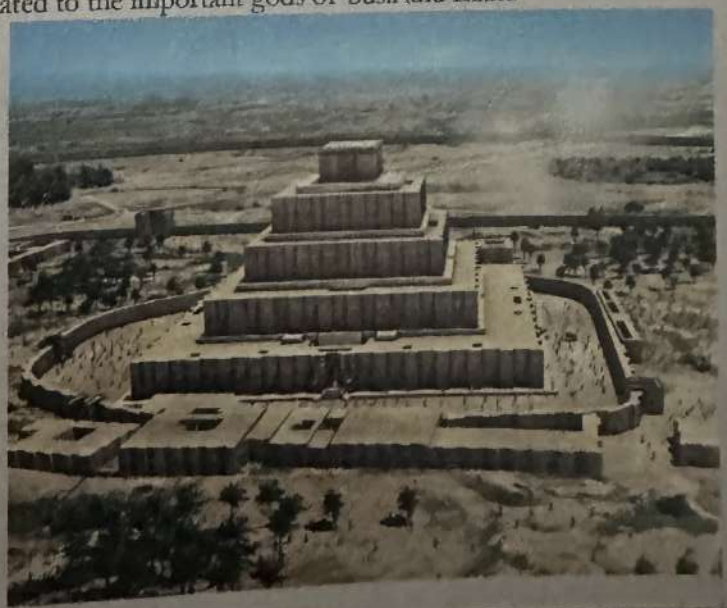
The most prominent historical monuments of the second half of the second millennium have been discovered in Chogha Zanbil. This city which de Mecquenem discovered it in 1935 and he speculated there, then R. Ghirshman excavated there from 1951 to 1962. Chogha Zanbil was built in the 14th century BC by Untash-Napirisha King. The city, which was prosperous only during the reign the King, was called Dur-Untash (Untash's City) after its founder.

The whole complex was basically a religious city and it covered an area of 100 hectares in the center of which the ziggurat was built, which was dedicated to two deities, Inshushinak and Napirisha, and was protected by the first wall of the city. Before the construction of the ziggurat, there was a quadrangular building around a central courtyard with two temples, both of which were dedicated to the same god, Inshushinak. Later, a ziggurat was erected inside the courtyard. The space between the first and second fences or walls contained about twelve places of worship; the two temples of Ishniqarab and Kiririsha, near the ziggurat, were the most important of these temples. Nusku Temple and three palaces, one of which was dedicated to the burial ceremony of members of the royal family, were located between the second and third fortification walls. Most of the royal inscriptions in Elamite and Akkadian are dedicated to the important gods of Susa and Elam.



A brick with Elamite Cuneiform Inscription, which was dedicated to the Pinikir goddess by King Untash-Napirisha. This brick was found in the temple of the goddess, which is located east of the ziggurat ▲

Elamite Axe Head bearing the name of King Untash-Napirisha. With boar on the heel. The blade appears to arise from a lion's mouth. From the temple of Kiririsha at Chogha Zanbil. Created with electrum and stone in 1300 B.C. ▲



Conquests of Elam: 12th century BC.

From the first seasons of exploration in the Acropolis, under the remains of the Parthian and Achaemenid eras near the temple of Inshushinak, de Morgan found an exceptional collection including statues of kings, victory memorial stones, official documents, etc., all of which belonged to Mesopotamia.
On some of these historical remains, there were writings that were added to them later, indicating that the mentioned works were the spoils that the Elamite conqueror, Shutruk-Nakhunte I, around 1100-1200 BC. that plundered various cities in the south of Mesopotamia such as Sippar, Akkad and Eshnunna and brought them with him to Susa. In this way, these writings have turned the works belonging to Mesopotamia into historical documents of Elam.

Top level: Mesopotamian Gods in symbolic form, second level: animals and deities playing musical instruments (detail), "Unfinished" Kudurru, Kassite period, attributed to the reign of Melishipak, 1186–1172 B.C.E., found in Susa, where it had been taken as war booty in the 12th century B.C.E. (Louvre, Paris)

n addition to the obelisk of King Manishtuso and the commemorative stone of the victory of Sargon and Naram-Sin from the Akkad period, as well as the Kuduru (border mark) of the Kassite period, the explorers in 1901-1902 unearthed a very important Babylonian document, Code of Hammurabi of laws, which was broken into three pieces.

On many of these, Shutruk-Nakhunte introduces himself as "the son of Hutelu-tush-Inshushinak, the beloved servant of Inshushinak, the king of Anshan and Susa, the expander of the territory, the protector of Elam, the prince of Elam" and after this, it is pointed out to Inshushinak that under his command Shut-ruk-Nakhunte, takes a special action, and said, "I destroyed Karduniash (Babylon), I destroyed Sippar and I destroyed Eshnunna". Then he talks about the trophies he got.

Seated headless statue of the king from Eshnunna. Old Babylonian period, diorite stone. The Louvre Museum

Basalt Stele with Law Code of Hammurabi
Hammurabi is portrayed receiving the laws directly from Shamash the sun god. The laws, written in cuneiform, are inscribed on the lower part of the monument.
c. 1780 BC

The Victory Stele of Naram-Sin is a stele that dates to approximately 2254–2218 BC, in the time of the Akkadian Empire, carved in pinkish sandstone, with cuneiform writings in Akkadian and Elamite. It depicts the King Naram-Sin of Akkad leading the Akkadian army to victory over the Lullubi, a mountain people from the Zagros Mountains.

Kudurru (stele) of King Melishipak I (1186–1172 BC): the king presents his daughter to the goddess Nannaya. The crescent moon represents the god Sin, the sun the Shamash and the star the goddess Ishtar. Kassite period, taken to Susa in the 12th century BC as spoils of war.

Stele of Addo Hamitti Inshushinak King ff Anzan AND Susa, From Susa, CA 650 BC. ▲

First millennium BC.

After the defeat of the kingdom of Elam in the twelfth century BC, Susa is one of the few cities in the land that has returned to the nomadic era, even the scribes and clerks had abandoned the city, and that is why the history of Susa from the time of its fall and decline up to the end of the eighth century is remained unclear.

With the arrival of the Medes, who were first mentioned by the Assyrians, the north and west of the plateau gradually gained its Iranian identity. The Medes also annexed the small territory of Ellipi located in the present day Lorestan. As a result, the brilliant tradition of metal industries of the semi-Illyrian mountain dwellers of this region is revived.

These people mixed Iranian culture with prehistoric and Elamite monuments in their art.

At the end of the 8th century BC, the territory of the Kingdom of Susa and Anshan was revived and took over the support of the new Elamite civilization. A small temple building on the Acropolis of Susa with beautiful colorful glazed decorations is a symbol of this support. At the same time, the princes of the small state of Ayapir near the middle plain of Izeh (Malamir) seized the reliefs of their Elamite ancestors and created new ones that showed religious ceremonies in the open air. There are no traces of gods in these motifs. Although in 648 B.C. Ashurbanipal, the powerful king of Assyria, destroyed the land of Susa, the history of Elam did not end. Soon the city will be rebuilt, the official archives of this period tell about the coexistence of the native people of this region and the Persians who had penetrated among them.

Glazed vessel, Neo-Elamite period (700 BC.). Susa, found in a tomb located in the Royal City. ▲

Recumbent guardian lion of Temple of Inshushinak; glazed terracotta sculpture: Susa (Acropole), Neo-Elamite period ◄

The reconstructed plan of the palace of Darius the Great (Apadana) in Susa ▼

Achaemenid

Darius the Great, the Achaemenid emperor, after defeating his enemies in 520 or 521 BC, choose Susa as his throne. During the Achaemenid period, Susa was the most important administrative center and the main site of the court and Royal for most of the year. The remained objects of the Achaemenid city are spread over an area of about 100 hectares on three hills that archaeologists have called Acropolis, Royal City and Apadana.
The royal city was protected by a huge mud-brick wall with a width of about 20 meters at the base and a height of 10 to 12 meters. This city was surrounded by a ditch from the north and east. This ditch was filled with the water of the Shaur River, which had been deviated.
In addition, a small fortification was built in Acropolis. The gate was discovered in the eastern part of the Royal city (1); the gates were probably located on the west and south sides. The main palace is located on Apadana Hill. This palace includes a large gate (2), the royal residence (3), and adjacent to it the audience hall or Apadana (4); It is surrounded by gardens. On the east side of this palace, a passage with a Propylaeum (5) connects the main palace with the royal city. Outside the city, on the west bank of Shaur River, another but smaller palace was built by the order of Artaxerxes II (6).

Palace of Darius the Great

The palace of Darius the Great in Susa is a unique example of Achaemenid architecture and an important indicator in the process of royal architecture in the Middle East. This building, which is associated with the honors of the Achaemenid kings, is one of the most famous palaces of ancient times. The Old Testament book and many ancient writings have mentioned it.

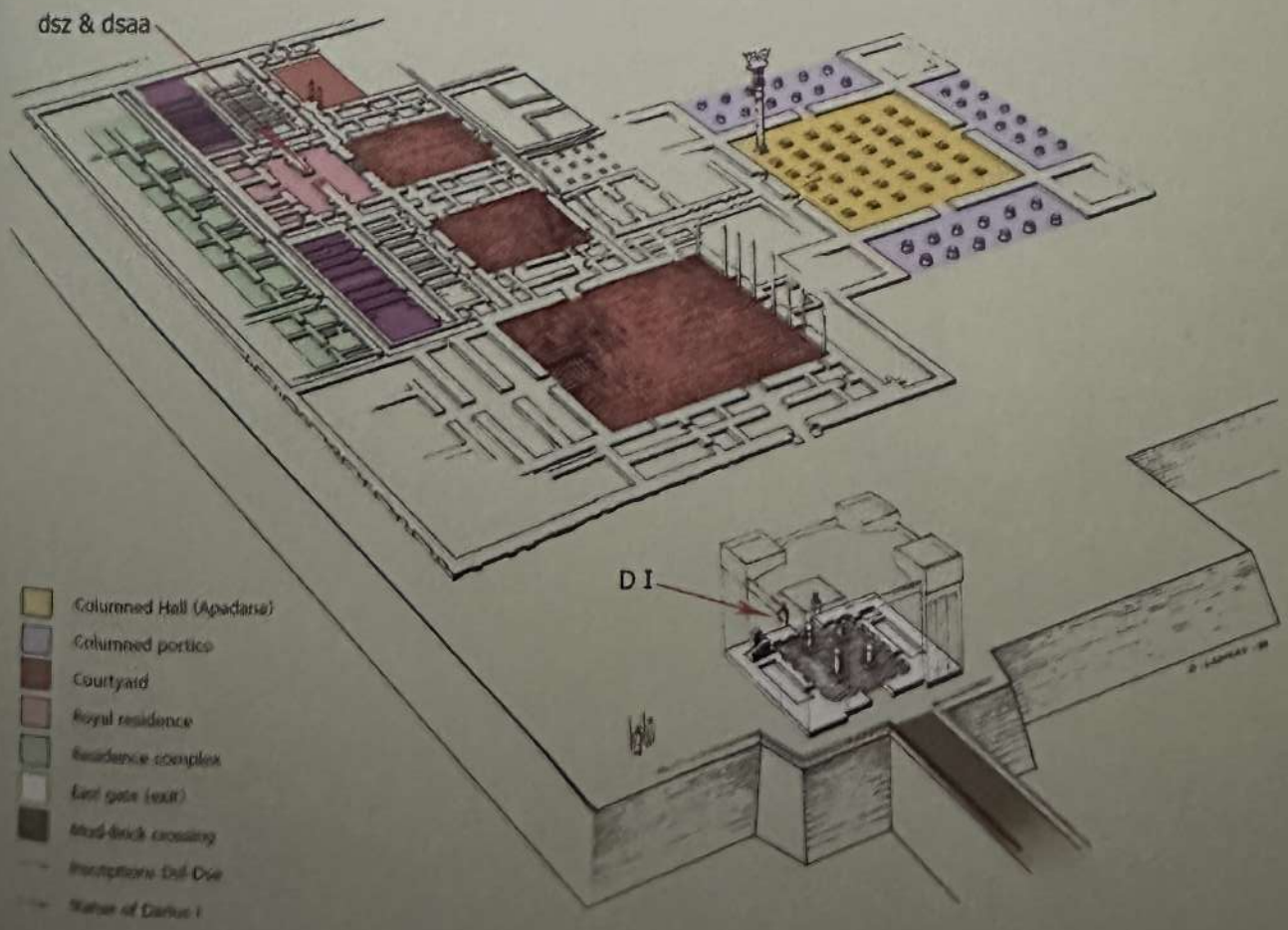
The palace was located on an irregular quadrilateral artificial terrace with an area of about 13 hectares. The highest point of the terrace was 18 meters above the level of the plain. The access way to the main platform was a staircase with a view of friezes made of glazed bricks with relief motifs of archers with gift-bearers climbing the stairs, which were discovered in various positions in the early years of exploration in Susa.

The palace complex consists of two ceremonial and residential parts. The most important building of its ceremonial part is the Apadana Hall with dimensions of 109 x 109 meters and an area of 10434 square meters, which is also the northernmost building in the complex. This building consists of a central hall measuring 58 x 58 meters with 6 x 6 rows of stone pillars about 20 meters high with bull-shaped capitals of columns. On the three northern, eastern and western sides of this hall, there are three pillared porches, each with 2 x 6 rows of columns and a large entrance door with double wooden doors.

On the four pillars of this hall, there is an inscription of (rtaxerxes II (A2Sa) with the following theme: "My great-grandfather's father, Darius, made this Apadana. Then, during the time of my grandfather Artaxerxes, it destroyed by fire .With the grace of Ahura Mazdā, Anahita and Mitra, I restored this Apadana. May Ahura Mazdā, Anahita and Mitra protect me from all evils and may they protect what I have created from destruction and damage.

The southern side of the Apadana Hall has two exits that open to the part of the palace complex, which is the residential part of the palace of Darius I. In some inscriptions (DSf) it is called Hadish and in others (DSd) it is called Tachara. This part is 246 meters long and 15 meters wide and has an area of about 20,675 square meters. It consists of 110 rooms, corridors and 4 courtyards. It is not similar to Achaemenid architecture in terms of plan and design, and it is most likely imitated from Assyrian and Babylonian palaces.

In 1970 two stone tablets with cuneiform inscriptions were found on both sides of the entrance of the royal residence of this complex. All six sides of the tablets are written, one of these tablets is in Akkadian script and language and the other one is in Elamite script and language.



Axonometric projection of Darius' palace

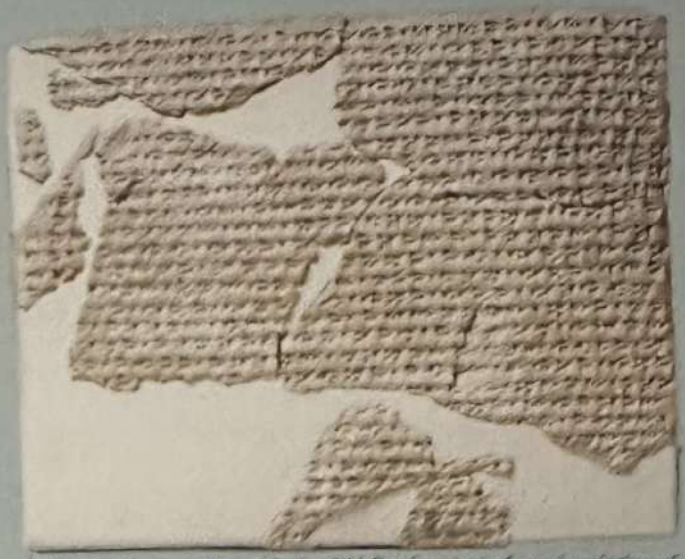
Decorative panel with sphinxes from the palace of Darius I at Susa ▲
521-486 BC. Louvre Museum

The reasons of the destruction of the Achaemenid palaces of Susa

One of the most controversial topics regarding the Achaemenid palaces of Susa, has been their history and the reason for their destruction. The archeological board of Susa, headed by Jean Perrot, concluded that the palace was destroyed by natural death.
The huge dimensions of the palace, the artificial foundation, the clay and its abandonment after the extinction of the Achaemenids are among the reasons mentioned for the destruction of the palaces. Written sources also tell about the peaceful surrender of Susa to Alexander and his soldiers. Even in the Achaemenid period, some parts of the palace were subsidence and the architects and restorers solved this problem. However, it is possible that the palaces were damaged in the conflicts between Macedonian generals in later periods.
Mir Abedin Kabuli, during several excavation seasons in the western front of the Apadana throne, while rejecting the previous theory of non-Iranian (French) archaeologists who claim that Apadana was destroyed by natural death, he confirmed the destruction of this great building by taking into account the discovery of hundreds of war arrowheads and harpoons of the bronze type and according to the studies done on them, it is caused by the attack of the soldiers of Alexander the Great.
But these events could have happened in later periods as well, and one should be careful in attributing them to Alexander the Great and her armies.

Bronze harpoons and spear heads, related to the Greek Macedonian ▼
soldiers, the western gate of Apadana

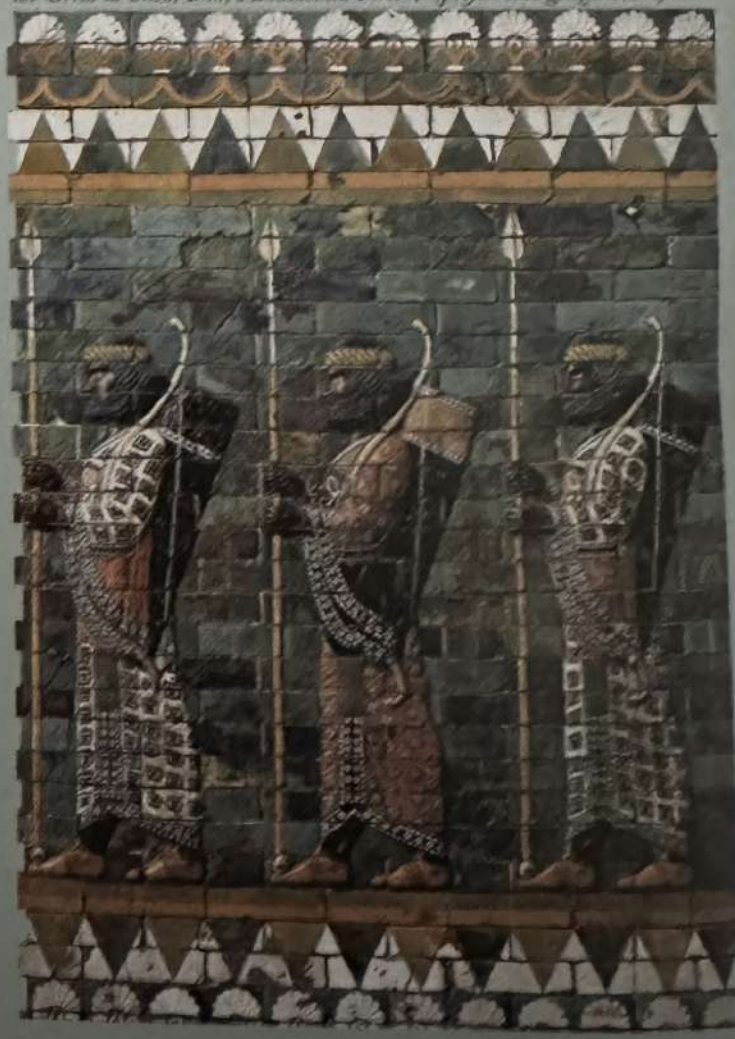
After the titles: "I Darius the great king, the king of kings, the king of the countries, the king of this land, the son of Hystaspes" the text of the inscriptions is about how to build the palace of Susa and the preparation of its materials and mentioning the regions from which these materials were obtained.



▲ *Oversized clay tablet with the Old Persian text of an inscription of Darius I (DSf), usually called "Foundation Charter of the Palace"*

The names of various tribes who participated in the construction of the palace are also mentioned in these inscriptions.

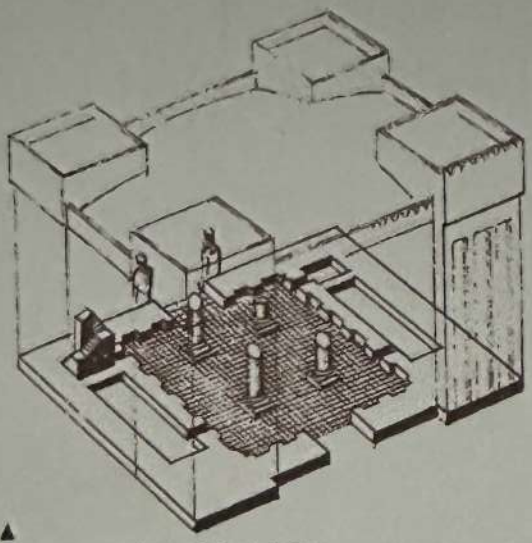
Frieze of archers of the Persian kings guard, from the Palace of Darius ▼
the Great at Susa, Iran, Achaemenid Period, (polychrome glazed brick)



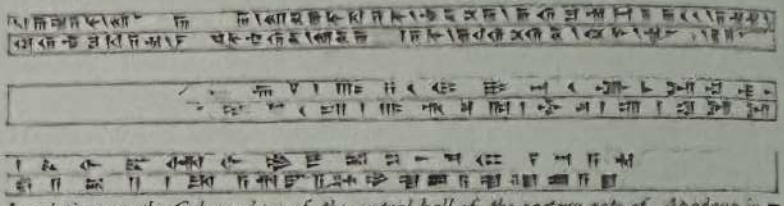
Darius Gate

This ceremonial gate, which is located in the middle of the eastern front above platform and at a distance of 80 meters from the palace complex, was discovered during the excavations of 1970 AD. This mud-brick gate is 40 meters long and 28 meters wide and has an approximate area of 1200 square meters, which probably had towers in its four corners that were a little higher than the height of the gate (15 meters). This gate has a square central hall, in which the roof is supported by four columns. In the north and south of this hall there were two small side rooms that opened to the hall through one meter wide doors. An inscription of Xerxes on the base of the columns of the central hall indicates that this building was built by the order of Darius.

On the right side of the entrance of this gate, a stone statue of Darius the Great was found in 1972, which is now kept in the National Museum of Iran.



▲ *The reconstructed plan of Dariush Gate*



Inscriptions on the Column base of the central hall of the eastern gate of Apadana in ancient Persian, Elamite and Akkadian. ▼

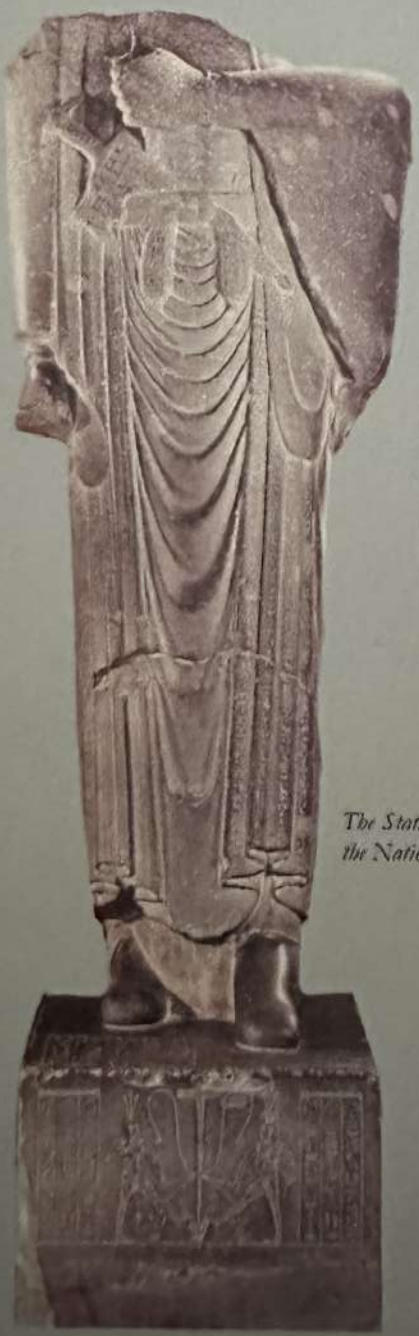
Statue of Darius the Great

This statue is one of the few remaining three-dimensional figures from the Achaemenid period. The height of the statue without taking into account the upper part -that is missing- is 2.36 meters.

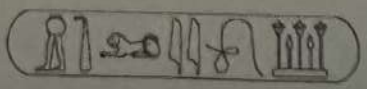
The king is wearing a Persian costume for the ceremony. There are inscriptions on the folds of the statue's clothes. These inscriptions are written in cuneiform script in the three official languages of the empire, i.e. Old Persian, Elamite and Akkadian on the right side and in Egyptian hieroglyphic script on the left side. Titles and titles of the king are presented in these inscriptions.

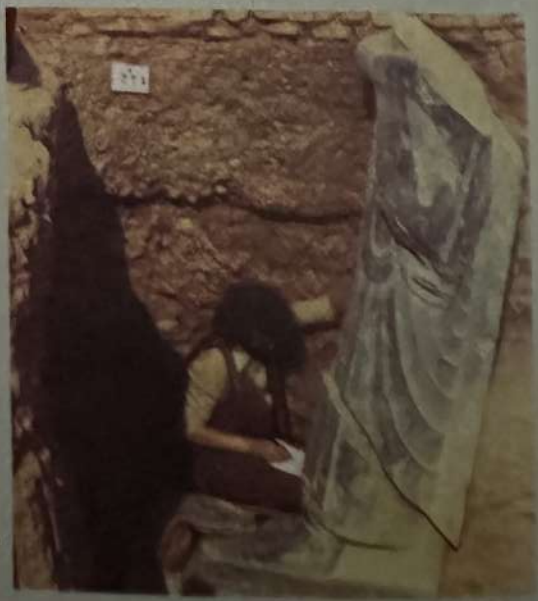
The statue rests on a base in the shape of a rectangular cube. The decorations on the base level are inspired by Egyptian decorations. The symbol of the unity of Upper and Lower Egypt is engraved on the front and back of this base, and an inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphs is carved on both sides.

In the right and left body of this base, the figures of the representatives of the 24 nations under the Achaemenid Empire are shown with different clothes, coverings and hairstyles. Under each of these figures, their nationality is written in hieroglyphs and in Egyptian style in a frame containing the name designed in the shape of a rampart.

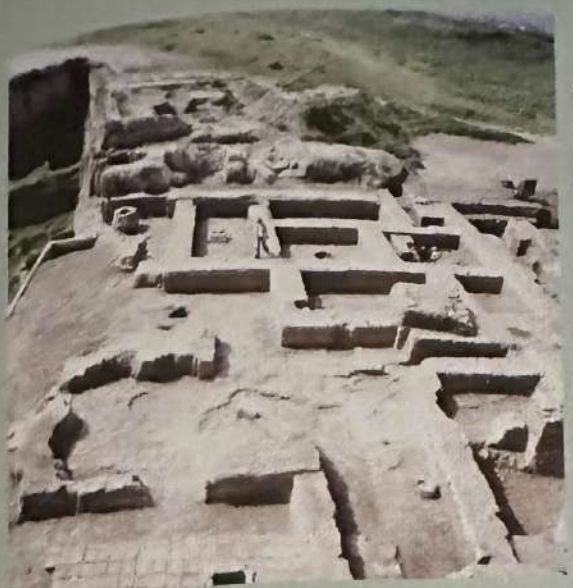


The Statue of Darius exhibited at the National Museum of Iran ◄





Darius's statue in the archaeological context of its discovery ►



Remains of the Propylaeum

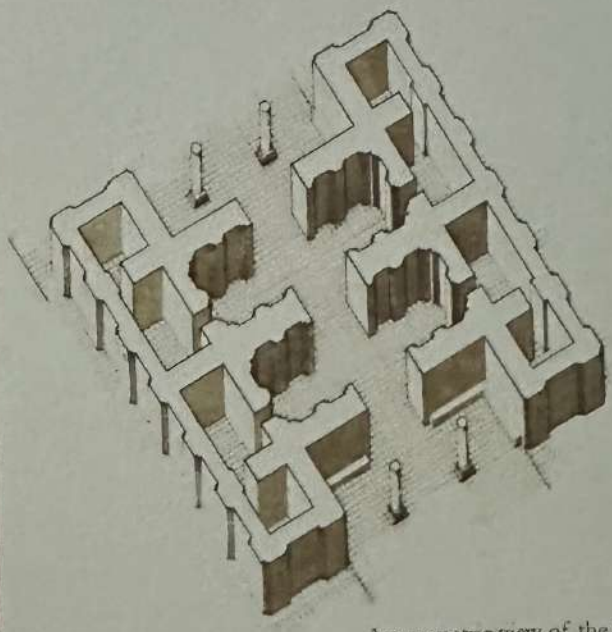
Susa: The Propylaeum

A few hundred meters northwest of Darius Gate and near the northwest edge of Royal city is a building called Darius Entrance.

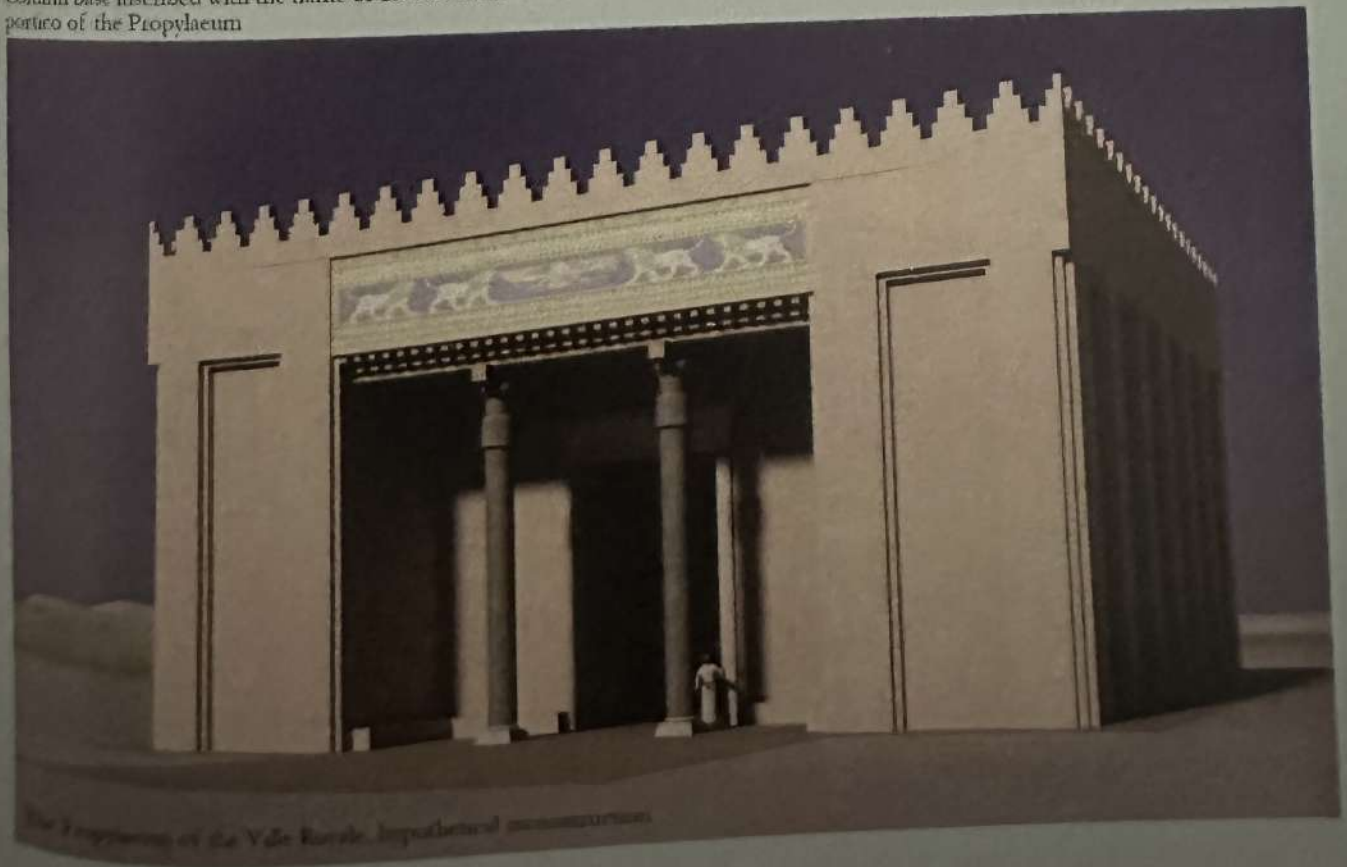
This building measures 24x24 meters with pillared porches in the north and south and four symmetrical rooms around a square central space that is partially divided by internal walls. In the trilingual inscriptions of Xerxes on the base of a column discovered there, the construction of this building is attributed to his father Darius.

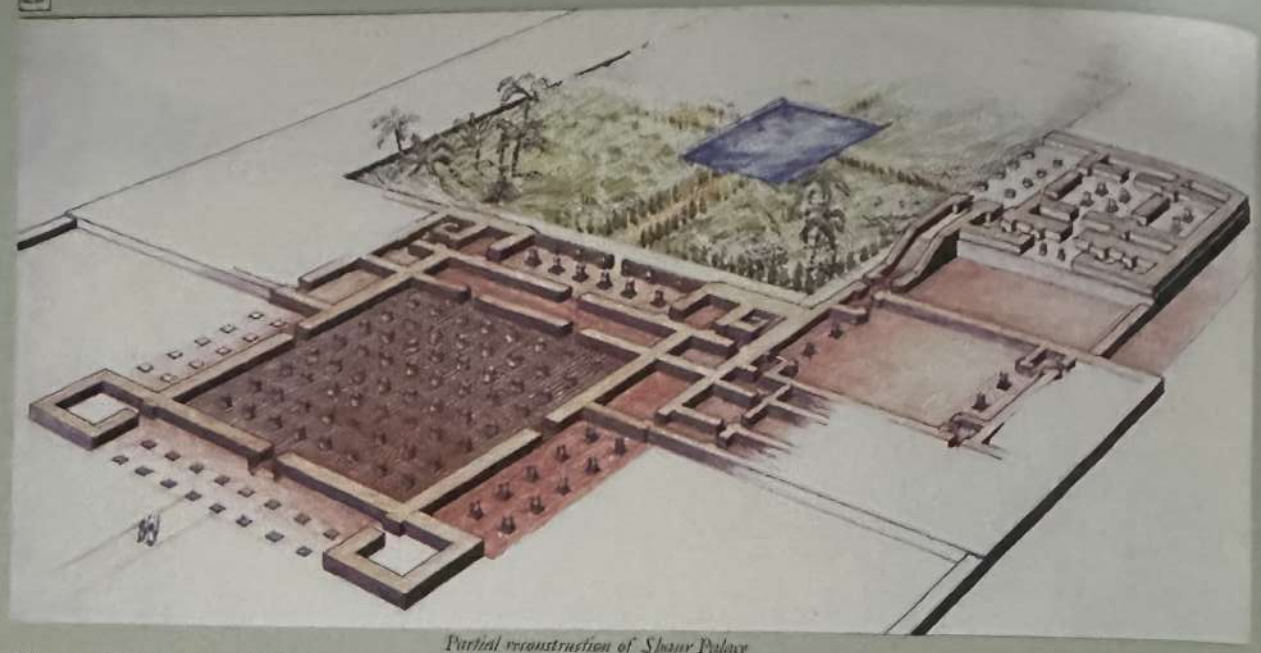
It is interesting that Xerxes calls this entry "Hadish", literally meaning "palace", which Darius also used when talking about his much bigger palace. Pierre Amiet considered this building to be similar to the Propylaeum.

Column base inscribed with the name of Xerxes in the south portico of the Propylaeum



Axonometric view of the Propylaeum





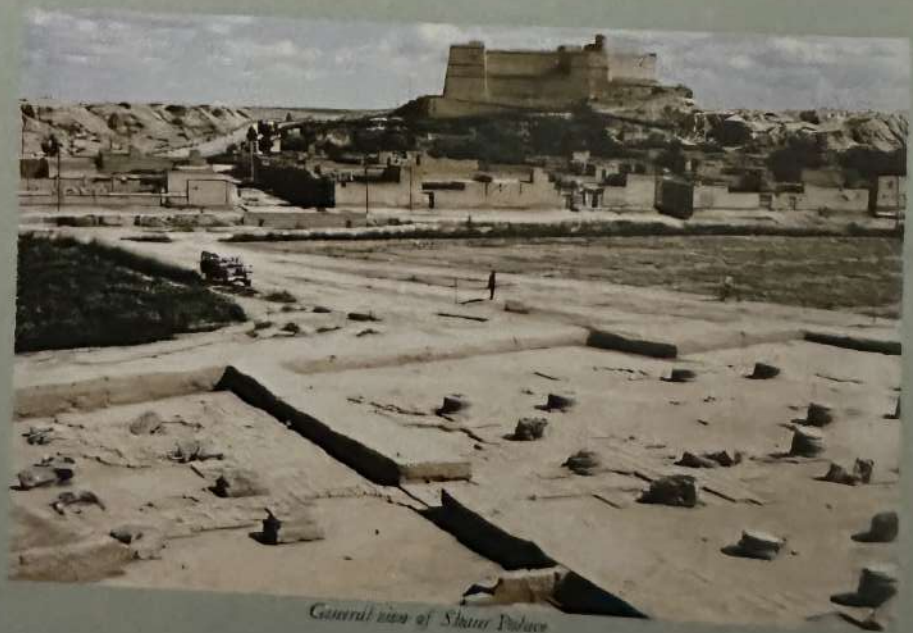
Partial reconstruction of Shaur Palace

Shaur Palace (Artaxerxes II)

In 1969 AD, during construction operations on the west bank of the Shaur River, approximately 400 meters west of Apadana hill, the bulldozer blade hit some Achaemenid columns. During the excavations carried out in this area from 1970 to 1976 AD, the remains of another Achaemenid palace were discovered, which is known as the Shaur Palace. Shaur Palace is a relatively large complex with 220 meters length and 150 meters width, which consists with 8 x 8 rows of columns and other parts of a columned hall measuring 37.5 x 34.6 meters. The base of the stone columns of this pillared hall is similar to the base of the columns of the Apadana hall, but smaller in size, and painted wooden columns are placed on them. There are three entrances on the three northern, eastern and western sides of this hall, and its southern side has two exits that open to the residential part of the palace.

On the south side of the palace, there is an area that was probably a garden, and on the west side (southwest of the columned hall) there is a residential area including several rooms, a small pillared hall with 2x2 rows of columns, which leads to a pillared porch with 2x4 rows of columns and some side rooms are visible when the doors open.

Complete orthostate of a servant wrestling



General view of Shaur Palace

احتمالاً قسمت‌های مختلف این کاخ را اندود، رنگ آمیزی و با نقوش چند رنگ گیاهان تزئین کرده بودند. در این کاخ همچنین چند تکه نقش برجسته سنگی به دست آمده که نگهبانان نیزه‌دار و خدمت‌گزاران پارسی و مادی را در حال حمل ظروف غذا نشان می‌دهد. قطعاتی از چند کتیبه نیز به دست آمده است که این کاخ را هدیش خوانده و ساخت آن را به اردشیر نسبت داده است. احتمالاً این شاهنشاه هنگامی که مشغول بازسازی کاخ اصلی بر روی تپه آپادانا بود، کاخ شاوور را برای استقرار موقت خود بنا نهاده است

Bronze funerary coffin. Watercolour by Jacques de Morgan

A Bronze Coffin From The Acropole

On the Acropole, Jacques de Morgan found two tombs with bronze coffins, one of which had been robbed because it contained only a fragment of an ivory comb, but the other was intact. According to De Morgan, the skeleton lying on its back in the coffin with its head bent forward belonged to an old woman who was buried with her ornaments around her head and chest. In this coffin, there were two white marble vases and a silver cup. The masterpiece of this collection of objects was a large gold necklace, which was one of men's ornaments, because, for example, on the famous mosaic of Pompeii, which depicts the defeat of Darius III by Alexander, the king of kings wears such an ornament. The necklace of Susa's grave with a diameter of more than 20 cm consists of two parts that are connected with clips so that it can be opened and adjusted around the neck. The surrounding decorations are very delicately worked and its end is in the shape of two lion heads, which is studded with turquoise, lapis lazuli and oysters. The master craftsman of this work, who used Egyptian techniques, portrayed the reality in a powerful way to make it look good in this royal jewel.

The archers depicted in the glazed bricks of Susa each have golden bracelets on their wrists, which shows that such ornaments were specific to men. A pair of these bracelets was found in the grave belonging to a Susa woman. This bracelet has the shape of a spiral rattan inlaid with lion heads as beautifully and elegantly as the necklace. Since most of the ornaments of this period were obtained from unauthorized excavations, this collection is unique, and perhaps it date can be estimated to 350 BC from the two Phoenician coins of the last years of the Achaemenid Empire.

Details of the bracelet found in the coffin

Part of the jewelry found in the coffin

Ceramic Antefix from Royal City of Susa, Hellenistic period

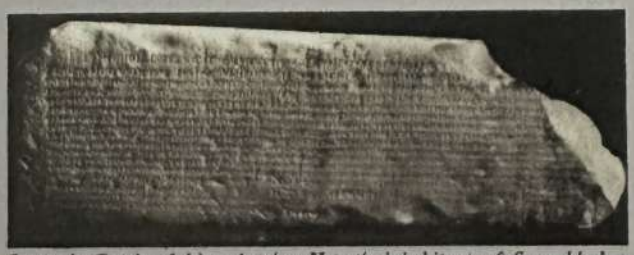
Seleucid and Parthian periods

Susa was no longer the capital of an empire, but at the end of the 4th century BC, it became a Greek city under the name Seleucia of the Eulaios. Archaeological data show us that from the post-Achaemenid period (280-330 BC) and the Seleucid period (150-280 BC) on the one hand, some neighborhoods of the city were built (or rebuilt?) and on the other hand, the Achaemenid palaces without any changes in them (Darius Gate, Shaur Palace) have been inhabited again despite the destruction and damage that has been in parts of them.

During the Seleucid period, there was no important reconstruction of the palaces, and there is no sign of the storage of official objects left, to show that these buildings were used as administrative buildings or residences of the ruling group of the city.

The influence of Hellenistic (Greek) culture was very strong in Susa and continued until the Parthian period. Susa had completely taken on the appearance of a Greek city, with social institutions, stadiums and theaters, etc., even Greek gods were worshiped in the city, and this quality is clear from the minted coins and inscriptions found by French archaeologists. But none of these buildings haven't been found yet.

However, in the northern part of the city, where a large area of the city was excavated by Ghirshman, there is a network of perpendicular streets with large "villas", one of which has a facade with built-in columns, and has halls and courtyards that are elegantly decorated with It was covered with brick and had roofs covered with pottery works with a harmonious Greek coving and in harmony with palm leaf-shaped batten roofs. This first city in the "Greek style of Susa" has taken the architectural elements of the Achaemenid buildings and reused them. The materials collected from these buildings are a mix of local tradition and Greek influence, which include; Pottery (indigenous shapes, Greek style and some Greek imports) or objects with more characteristics such as small statues (Persian or Macedonian horsemen, oriental naked goddesses, musicians with wavy pleated clothes and Greek-style gods).



Letter in Greek, of king Artaban II to the inhabitants of Susa. block of grey marble was found by M. de Mecquenem at Susa in 1931/1932. ▲

Parthian, to late first century AD, is considered the highest period in terms of the expansion of Susa. Large residential areas were no longer built in the western style and the production became native again. Large cemeteries and also large pottery workshops cover the city of Craftsmen.

female Bone figurines in a standing position, hands on the chest, with decorated hair. The Louvre Museum in Paris ▼

Marble head of Queen Musa (also known as Thermusa, c. 2 BCE - 2 CE). National Museum of Iran. The National Museum of Iran ►

The Sassanid wall painting shows a scene of hunting with a horse; which was discovered in one of the pillared buildings of the royal city of Susa, is one of the evidences of Sasanian painting in Iran. A replica of Susa Museum ▲

The Sassanian

In this period, Susa was in decline, despite the existence of a small palace with carved walls and a pillared doorway in the Royal City A of layer IV, which according to Ghirshman's hypothesis is the palace or the temple of Mithras.

About this period, the importance of an event has been noted; the destruction of the city of Susa by Shapur II in the middle of the 4th century to put down a riot. Without exaggeration about the consequences and results of this political move, it must be admitted that the city's decline and its gradual abandonment take place from the fourth century onwards, according to archaeological data.

Around the year 350, Shapur II built a rectangular city in Ivan Karkheh and placed textile workshops in it. In the residential part of the city, which was speculated by Ghirshman in 1950, there are buildings worthy of attention, one of which had a porch and was decorated with paintings. This city - like Gundeshapur, Which its fame is due to its schools - was undoubtedly founded to replace Susa. Only at the end of this period, the 6th and 7th centuries, it seems that Susa somehow regained its value and prestige and announced its revival.

The reconstructed of the Sasanian building of Eiwan-e Karkheh ▼

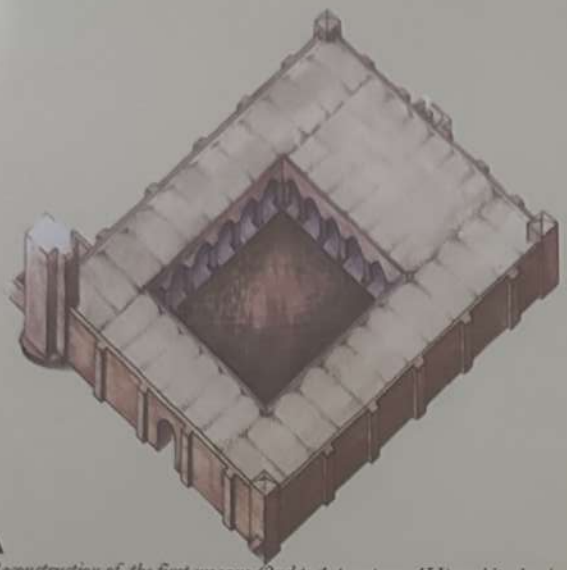
The historical city of Eiwan-e Karkheh, located 35 kilometers north of Susa, was spread over 400 hectares. For the water supply of the new city and the irrigation of its agricultural lands, the water of the Karkheh River was stored and diverted by a dam. The southern quarter of the city is a residential part with brick buildings.

Map of the Sassanid building of Eiwan-e Karkheh ▲

A jar containing 1171 silver dirham coins was discovered near the Darius Gate in Susa. ▼

Susa in the first Islamic centuries

The excavations carried out in Susa in the last century revealed some of the remains of the Islamic city. Other works have been destroyed due to soil erosion or the haste of archaeologists of that period to discover older remains. Most of the Islamic city still remains in the heart of the earth. Most written sources (contemporary Syrian-Armenian sources and later Arabic-Persian sources) point to the weak resistance that Susa showed against the Muslim army. Only Al-Maqdisi speaks of fierce battles. The excavations confirmed the first hypothesis, because no sign of destruction or fire was found.



▲ *Reconstruction of the first mosque (2nd to 1st century AH) and its development (3rd to 4th century AH). The first mosque is made of mud-brick and the second mosque is made of brick with Decorated columns and stucco decorations with inscriptions and plants have added to its beauty.*

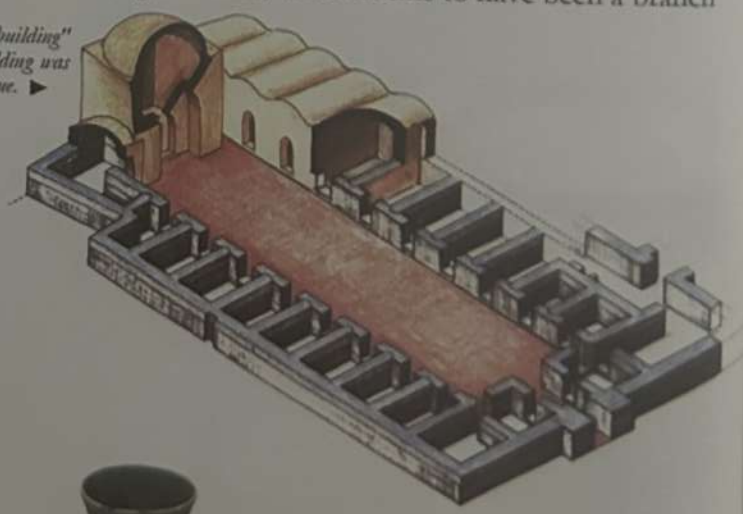
Pieces of stucco from Susa Mosque ►

These excavations made it possible to understand the topographic evolution of the city and clarified the contradictions in the written sources. While Al-Maqdisi sanctified the city a ruin in the 4th century AH/10th century, al-Idrisi calls it as a populous city, in the 6th-12th century. He remembers, a city whose range was wide on the two shores of Olay (Shaur).

According to Benjamin a tourist from the city of Tudela (Spain), a bridge over this river has made the connection between these two parts possible. The conducted excavations show the transformation of the city as follows: the Muslim community consisting of the Arab conquerors and the first new Muslims of the city, settled in the eastern hill, which was uninhabited, and built the first mosque there.

New Susa expanded around this mosque from the 2nd to 6th century AH/ 8th to 12th AD. In the west of the old city where Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians lived before the conquest of Susa, with a slow process finally in the 4th century AH/10th century was abandoned and destroyed. During this period, the inhabitants of Susa, who had become more Muslim, settled in the east, next to a large channel, which seems to have been a branch of Shaur river in that period.

Reconstruction of "public building" (khanqah, school?) This building was built shortly after Jame Mosque. ►



The remains of the bath that were discovered in the Achaemenid Apadana palace. The healthiest remaining parts of the bath are its greenhouses, which were identified by the brick pillars under its floor (2nd or 3rd century AH / 8th or 9th AD). ▼

An example of Islamic vessels from Susa. The Louvre Museum in Paris

▲ نمای هوایی آرامگاه دانیال پیامبر در کنار رود شاوور

Daniel the prophet

The Prophet Daniel's shrine in the city of Susa, next to the Shaur River, is a beautiful and very famous building that was recognized by Susa for many years Daniel is the son of John, a descendant of David, and one of the great prophets of Jews (7th century BC). The word "Daniel" in Hebrew means "God is my ruler In her youth, in the third year of Joachim's reign (655 BC), that prophet was captured by the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar and sent to Babylon with a group of Jews.

He interpret Nabonidus or in the language of the Old Testament book, Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and informed him of the end of his work. The prophecy of this prophet came true with the defeat of Babylon at the hands of Achaemenid Cyrus the Great within a few hours.
After the liberation of Babylon, he migrated to Iran under the leadership of a group of Jews and finally died in Susa.
But because Daniel was a famous prophet, a book with 12 chapters is dedicated to him in the Old Testament book. About the place of his grave, his honors, his body, and his coffin, there are legends and news that have reached historians and geographers, and there has been references to it in some of the books.
With the conquest of Susa by the Muslims, they found out about the existence of a room with a government seal in Susa, they asked the people about the situation and heard that the body of Prophet Daniel was in this room. Historians have written that they buried Daniel's body according to the instructions of Islam.
The dome of the Prophet Daniel's tomb was rebuilt in 1287 AH/1869 AD after the flood destroyed the older tomb. Sir William Ouseley, who saw this building in 1816 AD, mentions its dome as "jagged shaft".
Daniel's new mausoleum was built in the form of a (Chahartaqi) quadrilateral, square dome with a conical dome, and two minarets covered with tiles were added to it in 1330 AH. Prophet Daniel, as the second innocent person buried in Iran after the holy presence of Imam Reza, is of particular interest to Muslims, Muslims and other religious minorities and world travelers. The tomb of Daniel the Prophet is registered as number 51 in the list of national monuments of Iran.

The tomb of Daniel the prophet
before reconstruction in the Qajar period

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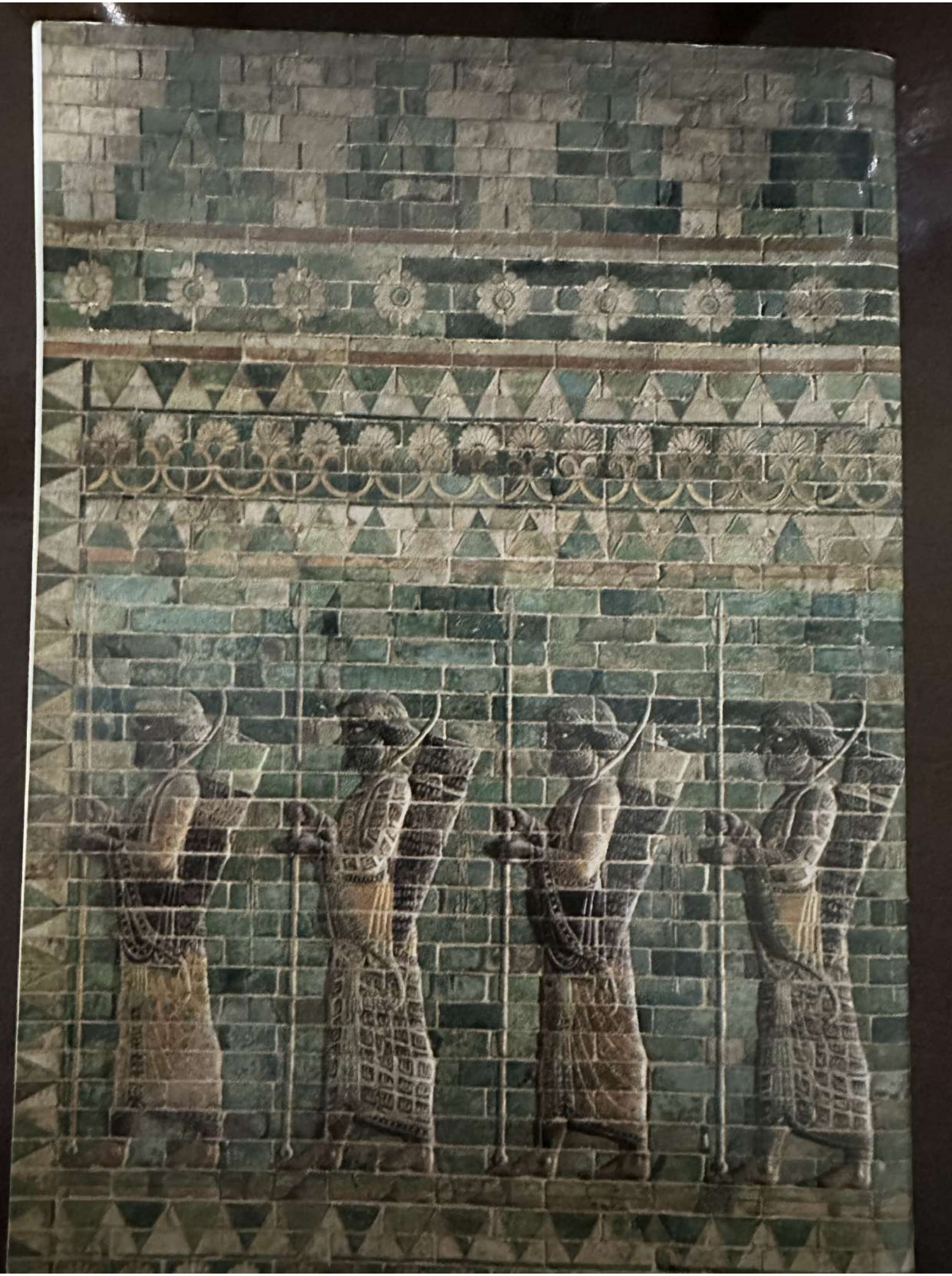
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